

Sydenham Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club Limited

**DIRECTORS' REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020**

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Company information

Registered office: Lawrie Park Road
Sydenham
London
SE26 6ET

Company number: 1280576 (England and Wales)

Chair's Report 2020

I hope that you will be able to join us for the Club's first virtual AGM. Normally we hold the Club's AGM in September each year but, due to the Covid crisis, the directors decided to defer the AGM to the latest possible date hoping that it would be possible to hold it in the Clubhouse as usual.

Unfortunately, as government restrictions on group meetings remain in place, members will not be able to attend the meeting in person. However, the government has passed legislation to enable companies, who do not have the necessary provisions in their articles, to hold AGMs virtually and take votes electronically, for a limited period of time.

As explained in the notice of the AGM, the meeting will be held by Zoom. In accordance with the Articles of Association, all members will be able to vote by poll, either by proxy before the meeting, or at the meeting itself. Details of how to vote are in the attached notice.

Members will be able to ask questions at the meeting, but we encourage members to send in written questions in advance. The quorum for the meeting is 17, but we hope that many more members will join.

Business Plan

1. Last year I reported that the Board had been reviewing the Club business plan and a copy of a plan that has been drawn up during 2020 is attached with the papers. There are a number of factors that the Board had to take into account when formulating this plan.
2. The first major issue was the structural problems with the squash court building. In order to preserve the squash court building for as long as possible, new cladding was installed around the top of the building earlier this year.
3. During 2018/19 the Board consulted experts regarding the possibility of carrying out further structural work to stabilise the building but, as the Club could not find anyone who would guarantee that any work carried out would extend the life of the building significantly, or indeed at all, the Board took the decision that further structural work would be uneconomical and not worthwhile.
4. Following on from this decision, the Board decided not to proceed with the pre-planning application, using the plans that had already been drawn up for a new clubhouse. Instead, the Board took the decision that a better option would be to draw up an alternative plan for a clubhouse, incorporating two new squash courts. This would then mean that the squash section would not have to close and, in fact, there is every prospect that the membership would grow.
5. A major point to consider in any project is how to finance it. The Board anticipate that a new clubhouse building would be financed mostly by grants and loans. Therefore, the Club needs to be in a financial position, not only to be able to take out a loan, but also to be able to make the repayments. The continuing income from squash facilities would provide invaluable financial assistance.
6. Another issue that the Board has had to address is that, although croquet has been played on site since the Club was originally formed, for many years now the croquet section has been subsidised by the rest of the Club members. The income from the membership fees of the croquet members, and other income brought in by the section, does not cover the proportionate share of the outgoings relating to the running of that section. Further, despite many efforts from the croquet section to increase their membership, this has steadily decreased and there are now only 21 croquet members, plus 3 multisport members, who use the croquet lawn.

7. Meanwhile, there has been a large increase in the tennis membership which now stands at 278 adult members, which is leading to pressure on court usage. Also, the coaching programme has grown and there would be considerable scope to extend this programme and increase the club's income with more court space.
8. As explained in the Club's 2020 business plan, which will be circulated with the AGM papers, the Board considers that the best way forward to cater for the increased tennis activities, both now and in the future, and to retain the squash section, is to close the croquet section and to build a new tennis court on the space where the croquet lawn is currently situated. This is also considered by the Board to be the only practical way in which the Club could raise sufficient funds to finance the loans required for a building project.
9. The Board has consulted with the croquet section on the proposal for the closure of the lawn and has agreed that the lawn should remain open until the end of September 2021. Several of the members of the croquet section have been looking for an alternative place to play, where they can remain together, and the directors have indicated that there may be scope to help them financially with this move. There is also a croquet club in Dulwich, so members do have access to alternative croquet facilities nearby.

Special Resolutions

The Board has put forward four Special Resolutions for the approval of the members of the Club. Each resolution requires 75% of the members voting in person at the meeting, or in proxy, to vote for the proposal for this to be passed.

Resolution A: This resolution proposes that a new tennis court should be constructed on the area where the croquet lawn is situated and that the croquet lawn should be decommissioned at the end of September 2021. The resolution also proposes that the Club then pursues the plan of building a new clubhouse with squash courts.

These two proposals are linked as the directors consider that there would be insufficient income to proceed with the building of a new clubhouse (with or without squash courts) without the additional income from a new tennis court.

Resolution B: This resolution is simply to remove the objects clause from the Memorandum of Association.

At the time that the Club was incorporated in 1976, the legislation provided that each company should have a Memorandum of Association with an objects clause, setting out the company's powers and the objects of the company. In the Companies Act 2006, the rules were changed and it is no longer necessary for companies to have such an objects clause.

The Board considers that the Articles of Association should be updated so that the Club's powers will be unrestricted, in accordance with the current legislation, in future.

Resolution C: This year we have been able to hold an AGM virtually as a result of legislation passed by the government in the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020. In order that we do not have to rely on the government to make further regulations to enable the Club to have further virtual meetings, the directors propose that the Articles of Association are changed to that the Club can hold virtual meetings in the future, if these are required. The proposed changes also include a reference accepting proxy votes by email, just to avoid any element of doubt on this issue in the future.

Resolution D: This resolution proposes that the Articles of Association should be altered to incorporate the two amendments referred to in Resolutions B and C and be substituted for current Articles of Association.

This is just a catch all resolution to ensure that the whole of the revised articles are approved by the Club.

The year 2019/2020

Although the AGM is taking place in December 2020, this is the annual meeting relating to the financial year ending on 5 April 2020 and the accounts that are being circulated with the AGM papers relate to that year.

Activities programme and lettings

During the financial year 2019/2020 the tennis activities programme did well with coaching for children and adults both on regular courses, the community tennis programme and holiday camps, both for members and non-members.

Block lettings in the Clubhouse also continued, with Witty Kiddies pre-school in the weekdays and several yoga groups in the evenings and a church group at the weekend.

Unfortunately, all these activities had to stop towards the end of March, due to the Covid crisis lockdown. This led to a significant shortfall in the Club's expected income, as the Easter Camp, group coaching programmes and all lettings had to be cancelled and/or refunded.

Membership

During 2019/2020 the membership income remained fairly steady and by April 2020 the Club had a total of 460 members with 213 tennis members, 81 squash members, 21 croquet members, 107 junior members, 17 multisport members and 15 social and life members. With improvements to the ClubSpark software that the Club uses to collect the membership fees, the collection of fees on renewals improved.

Financial

As a direct result of the Covid crisis, the expected income surplus at the end of the financial year was much lower than anticipated. The overall income was down by approximately £13,500, with losses on group coaching of around £8,000, camps of around £2,000, bar/events of £1,000, tennis activities £1,000, plus miscellaneous items and refunds against income for cancellations. There were only very minor cost savings as commitments were already in place.

Section News

Tennis - All tennis activities remained popular during the year, until the lockdown. The tennis leagues continued to grow and the Club participated in Kent and North Kent league matches in the Summer and Winter seasons, with the Men's 3 team winning Kent Division 5 in Summer 2019.

The recycling programme for tennis balls proved to be very successful. As a result of members returning their used balls to the Club, we have been able to recycle the balls and obtain further income of around £60 per month.

As part of the membership review in January 2020, the Board also decided to make all floodlights free of charge from April 2020. This has been a popular move and welcomed by tennis players. It also saves on administration costs and reduces security risks.

The cleaning and maintenance of the courts started last year too – see further details in the 2020 section below.

Squash and Racketball - In addition to the recladding of the roof area of the building, mentioned above, new LED lights were installed, which has improved the playing experience for members.

Further, as part of the fees review, the Board decided to charge an annual court fee for lighting and ventilation, rather than continue with the coin meter for each session. This move has been well received by members.

The Squash and Racketball Section decided not to participate in any outside leagues, as there was insufficient interest, but the internal box leagues remained extremely popular.

Croquet - The lawn maintenance programme was brought in house again during 2019/2020 to manage costs. The in house maintenance team received support from a specialist in croquet lawn care who supplied treatments and advice.

The Croquet members continued to participate in leagues and matches with the South East Croquet Federation.

2020 and Covid

The Covid crisis this year has resulted in a number of challenges for the Club and the staff. Although, this is the annual meeting for the year ending April 2020, members will no doubt be interested to know how the Club has faced these challenges during the remainder of 2020.

After the lockdown was announced in March 2020, the whole Club was completely closed for approximately two months in total.

Tennis - The Club reopened for singles tennis play on 16 May. Shortly afterwards, singles leagues were able to start, along with doubles play. Club play sessions, which have to be monitored by a member of staff, were able to restart in late August. Even with the latest Tier 2 restrictions, there has been no change to this arrangement.

Tennis has proved to be very popular across the country during the Covid crisis, being an outdoor sport that is considered to be safe. As a direct result, the Club's tennis membership has grown considerably, and the Club now has 278 full adult tennis members and 14 multisport members who play tennis.

Squash and Racketball - There have been more problems for the Squash and Racketball Section, which was closed for almost five months until 8 August, when it reopened for restricted play and then full court play, under certain playing conditions, in September.

Sadly, as a result of the change in London's status to Tier 2 on 17 October, all play has had to stop again. We do not know, at the moment, when the courts will be able to open.

Croquet - Play also had to stop for the first two months of the season, but was able to resume on 2 June under restrictions. Croquet members were able to start Club Social Play in August, but without the usual social activities.

Tennis Coaching Activities- - Coaching activities started with limited numbers in July and the Club was able to run holiday camps for juniors and drop-in classes for adults. The full group coaching programme recommenced in September.

A lot of participants dropped out of the group coaching programme as a result of the lockdown, but fortunately, the numbers are now picking up again and are nearly back to where they were in March.

Finances - The Club's finances benefitted by obtaining a £10,000 government grant during the lockdown. As a result of this grant, the increased tennis membership and certain costs savings, remarkably, the Club's finances are currently in a very healthy position.

Premises - The Board has now decided to proceed with replacing the floodlights on Courts 3 and 4 with LED lights, with a view to replacing all of the lights over the next couple of years. LED lights are more economical than the current lights, both in terms of electricity use and maintenance and have a much better quality of light for tennis play than the current lights.

Cleaning and maintenance work on the tennis courts is continuing. This has included deep cleaning Courts 1 & 2. Decompaction and repairs to the carpet on the artificial clay courts has been completed and new sand has been laid on Courts 3, 4 and 7.

President and Vice Presidents

Peter Lewis has been the Club's President for the usual term of two years now. This year the directors propose that Shelagh Brooks, who is a Vice-President, should take on this role. Many of you will know Shelagh, who has been an active member of the club in the tennis section for many years. She has been a director of the Club in the past and continues to help in an administrative capacity. She plays regularly at the Club, as well as in inter-Club matches.

Volunteer of the Year Award

This year we have decided to announce the Volunteer of the Year Award before the AGM, rather than at the meeting. This award is given to someone who has shown outstanding commitment to the Club during the year and who has not previously won the award. This year there has been one outstanding candidate for this award who is Jane Sheridan, the Chair of the Croquet section.

We received several nominations for Jane, who despite facing considerable difficulties, including the Covid crisis and the proposals for the closure of the Section, has worked tirelessly, with enormous time and energy to support the section, and also look for an alternative location where the croquet members could play in the future. She has a great ability to manage the section activities and encourage players of all standards. She has a real sense of fair play and inclusion and is always cheerful. Jane has also now agreed to stand as a director of the Club. The Board considers that she strongly deserves this award which will be presented to her at a convenient time following the meeting.

Board directors

This year we have had two resignations from the Board. Firstly, Hamish McDowell who took on the role of Croquet Director and secondly, David Burrow, who was the Events Director. They both remain members of the Club and we would like to thank both of them for all of their help and wish them both well. We hope that David will continue to assist with running events, as and when we are able to open the Clubhouse again.

We have two new candidates standing for directors' posts at the AGM. As mentioned above, the first is Jane Sheridan, who will represent the Croquet Section, if elected.

The second candidate is Keith McMillan, who has been on the Bar Committee for almost three years. If elected, the Board proposes that he will take over the job of Bar Director from Simon Taylor, enabling Simon to represent the Squash and Racketball section and continue with his excellent work as Secretary of the Club.

Departing staff

The Board also thanks Liam Hindson, who was the Assistant Manager from April 2017 until the end of October 2020. Liam handed in his notice as he now wants to concentrate on growing his own music teaching business. He will remain as a member of the Club, so he will still be around.

During his time as Assistant Manager, Liam was particularly active in updating all social media posts and the Club's website, as well as helping with many other administrative and technological issues.

Thanks

This year the directors would like to thank certain members of staff who have worked particularly hard during the Covid pandemic to keep the Club running. First and foremost, they would like to thank Dez, our Club Manager, who has worked tirelessly throughout the whole period since the lockdown in March. He has introduced many new members to the Club, managed the resumption of activities where possible and tracked and managed all the necessary Covid issues. He even laid all the new sand on three courts single handed. By managing costs and finding sources of income, the Club is in a strong position to come out of the crisis and plan for the future.

Also, particular thanks go to Toby, the Head Coach, who has worked hard to restart the Summer Camps, Community Tennis and Group Coaching programmes, as well as producing training videos during lockdown.

Many thanks must go to all volunteers, who have helped in that period. In particular, thanks go to members of the Board, past and present, who have all given up a considerable amount of their personal time to attend meetings during the Covid crisis, on Zoom and otherwise, to ensure that the Club can keep running. An updated list of all staff and volunteers will be put on the Members' area of the website following the meeting.

Finally, thank you to all of the members who have continued to support the Club.

Gillian Bartlett,

Chair of the Board of Directors

Sydenham Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club Ltd

1 November 2020

DIRECTORS' ATTENDANCE AT BOARD MEETINGS FROM 1.4.19 to 31.3.20

Director	History	Summoned	Attended	% Ratio
Gillian Bartlett		6	6	100%
Katharine Beaudry		6	6	100%
David Burrow		6	5	83.3%
Victoria Courtney		6	5	83.3%
Ray Franklin		6	6	100%
Hamish McDowell		6	4	66.7%
Simon Taylor		6	5	83.3%

Sydenham Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club Limited

(limited by guarantee)

DIRECTORS' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

The Directors hereby present their 44th report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2020.

PRINCIPAL ACTIVITY: The Company's principal activity is that of a sports club.

RESULTS: The results for the year are shown on pages 4-10 of the attached financial statements.

SHARE CAPITAL: The Company has no share capital and the liability of members is limited by guarantee.

CLUB PRESIDENT: Peter Lewis was elected as President at the 2019 AGM and will remain in this post until the 2020 AGM at which point another Club President will be elected. The Board does not propose to nominate anyone for an additional Vice President position this year.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: The following have served as directors of the Company since the last meeting (26 September 2019) and currently hold office, unless otherwise indicated below:-

Gillian Bartlett	Ray Franklin
Katharine Beaudry	Hamish McDowell (resigned September 2020)
David Burrow (resigned September 2020)	Simon Taylor
Victoria Courtney	

Katharine Beaudry and Simon Taylor retire by rotation and will stand for re-election. Jane Sheridan (Croquet) and Keith McMillan (Bar and Lettings) are standing for election at this Annual General Meeting as Directors of the Board.

BAR COMMITTEE: In accordance with the relevant statutory requirements, each member of the Bar Committee (Paulius Kriksciunas, Keith McMillan and Simon Taylor) retires and each stands for re-election.

SMALL COMPANIES SPECIAL PROVISIONS: The report of the Directors has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

The report was approved by the Board on 26 October 2020

Gillian Bartlett
Chair
on behalf of the Board of Directors