

Sydenham Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club Limited

DIRECTORS' REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2021

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Company information

Registered office: Lawrie Park Road
Sydenham
London
SE26 6ET

Company number: 1280576 (England and Wales)

Chair's Report 2021

After all the difficulties with the Covid restrictions and lockdowns last year, I am pleased to say that we will be holding the AGM in person at the Clubhouse as usual this year. The directors look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the meeting on 8 December 2021.

Last year, for the first time, the Club held its first virtual AGM by Zoom and took votes by proxy prior to the meeting and electronically at the meeting itself. We had a record number of votes for special and ordinary resolutions. Although we do not have any special resolutions this year, we are retaining the online proxy form so that members who cannot attend can still participate.

The meeting will be combined with some Christmas celebrations. There will be a complimentary drink on arrival with a mince pie and we hope that you will stay to have a drink or two afterwards in the bar.

The accounts and this report relate to the period from April 2020 to March 2021, during which the whole of the UK was subject to various Covid restrictions and lockdowns. The Club had to close for several months over this period and, when allowed to open, there were restrictions on play in relation to tennis, squash and croquet and the use of the Clubhouse.

It was not until 17 May 2021 that the Club was able to open fully, without any restrictions on play, for all three sports of tennis, squash and croquet. In the summer of 2020 and from April 2021, the Club could offer drinks/snacks for consumption in the grounds. The bar fully reopened in September 2021.

Activities programme and lettings

In the summer of 2020 it was possible to run the junior holiday camps. To meet Covid restrictions in place at the time, these were run on a new two-hour format with limited numbers. This new arrangement proved to be so popular that subsequent holiday camps have been run on a similar basis.

Group and community coaching programmes for both adults and children were able to start in September 2020. However, these had to stop again during the subsequent lockdowns and could not start again until after Easter 2021.

Lettings in the Clubhouse had to stop during most of 2020. Witty Kiddies nursery was able to reopen in September 2020 and only had to close for brief periods as it was exempt from most of the lockdowns. The nursery is now hiring the hall and kitchen in the Clubhouse for extended hours for five full days a week.

The church group has now returned at the weekends. Although we have lost all our yoga instructors, a new fitness class started in October 2021 on Saturday morning.

The bar/reception is now open on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings on a regular basis. It is also open on most Friday evenings and then is open at the weekend when Dez is around.

Membership

During 2020/2021, there was a surge in interest in playing tennis nationally and, as a result, the Club received many enquiries regarding tennis membership and we were able to take on members when the Club was able to open.

At the end of the financial year, when the Club had just reopened, overall membership was 504, including 301 adult tennis, 80 junior tennis, 74 squash/racketball, 22 croquet, and 15 multi-sport.

Since the end of the financial year, interest in tennis membership has continued to grow and the Club has had to start a waiting list, on which there are currently over 80 applicants. The current adult tennis membership now stands at 335 plus 25 multi-sport (October 2021).

Additionally, the junior membership has increased, largely due to a new junior coaching membership introduced in April 2021. This means that all juniors in the programme automatically obtain membership of the Club. The current junior membership is 163 and growing (October 2021).

Squash and racketball membership suffered more from the Covid pandemic with longer lockdown periods and tighter restrictions on play, when allowed to open. Although this resulted in a net loss of members, numbers are gradually recovering with several new members migrating from Crystal Palace Sports Centre, where squash courts remained closed for even longer periods.

Croquet membership has remained steady, standing at 24 plus 2 multi-sport (October 2021).

Financial

The restrictions on play that were imposed by the government as a result of the Covid pandemic, led to a significant shortfall in the Club's expected income from activities and lettings.

Fortunately, the Club was well supported by its members, many of whom continued to pay their membership when the Club was closed, on the basis that the renewal date for their membership would be carried forward. Therefore, to reflect these advance payments accurately in the accounts, these pre-payments are shown as a deduction in the subscription section of the 2020-21 accounts.

The Club was also helped considerably by several government and local authority grants which has meant that, with careful management of the expenditure, the Club suffered only a small loss during this financial year, when depreciation is taken into account.

Tennis section

Due to restrictions on tennis play, for the first time since the Second World War, the Club did not run an annual tournament over the summer of 2020. The Club was also unable to participate in any competitive leagues for most of the year, although a few friendly inter-club matches were played in the autumn of 2020.

The Club's singles leagues remained popular with consistently more than 100 members participating, and the Club was able to run a couple of American Mixed Doubles Tournaments under strict Covid guidelines.

Squash & Racketball section

The Covid restrictions were the most severe and long-lasting on indoor areas, and the squash courts were closed for a large proportion of the year, except for a brief period in August/September 2020. There were no tournaments or internal box leagues during the period. However, since reopening, the leagues have now restarted and the annual racketball tournament ran from September – November 2021.

A significant number of members took the opportunity to play tennis whilst the squash courts were closed, and several of these have now converted to All Sport memberships to continue to play both sports.

Croquet section

The members are enjoying an extended final season into October as long as the weather holds, as no autumn treatment work will be required. A tournament was held at the end of September. Section members will continue to meet in the Clubhouse over the winter.

Grounds & Premises

The forced closure of the Club gave us the opportunity to make progress with repairs and upgrades to the premises. At the beginning of 2020, the roof of the squash court building was in urgent need of repair. These repair works, including the installation of new cladding, were carried out in June 2020.

In October 2020 the Club replaced the floodlights on courts 3, 4 and 5 with LED lights. Members have appreciated the improved quality of the lighting on these courts, which do not need to warm up and are more economical to run than the previous halogen lamps.

Between March and May 2021, substantial cleaning and maintenance work took place on courts 1 and 2, as well as full court repainting and adding junior court lines. The Club is now arranging for LED lights to be installed on courts 1 and 2, and this work may be completed by the AGM.

During 2020 and 2021 the four clay courts had extra clay spread and levelled, and courts 3 & 4 had repairs to the carpet where some ridges had appeared. New aluminium benches with shelter were purchased to replace the old wooden benches that were falling apart.

There have been problems with the surface of Court 5 for some time due to land movement, and the Club now plans to convert this court to artificial clay. This will involve some remedial work to the tarmacadam base before laying the new carpet and clay. This should mean that the cracking at the edges of the court will be resolved but, in any event, if the problems re-emerge, this will be less of a problem with an artificial clay covering.

The Court 5 project will be part-funded by a Crowdfunder campaign in conjunction with Sport England, who will match fund any sums raised up to a maximum of £10,000. All other developments and improvements are being funded from Club revenue.

Business Plan and Special Resolutions 2020

At the AGM in December 2020 a special resolution was passed to replace the croquet lawn with a new tennis court. Although the result of the vote was disappointing for many croquet members, who will no longer be able to play at the Club from the end of this season, there may be some good news.

The London Borough of Lewisham has an old bowling green at Mayow Park, and the croquet section has been in communication with the Council about converting this for use as a croquet lawn, in conjunction with use by another local organisation for some theatrical performances. The arrangements are not finalised yet, but the Croquet section should be able to relocate to Mayow Park and use the lawn and storage facilities there for next year's season.

The Club will assist the croquet members, as much as possible, with this move and meanwhile the members will be able to continue to use the lawn, as long as possible into the autumn. They can also continue to participate in the Club as social members, once their current membership expires, if they wish to do so.

Plans for new Clubhouse and new tennis court

After the special resolution referred to above was passed last year, the Club arranged for Fraher & Findlay architects, to update the previous plans for the new Clubhouse. The new plans now include two squash courts in the main building and reconfiguration of some of the internal areas.

The Club has also obtained the views and updated quotations from contractors for the new tennis court that the Club plans to build where the croquet lawn is now situated. The plans are to construct a hard court as, due to the number of trees nearby, there would be too much leaf fall for the maintenance of an artificial clay court.

In preparation for the planning application, in April 2021, the Club arranged for an area in the north-west corner of the site to be cleared. This area had become overgrown with self-seeded trees and scrub and several trees were in a poor condition. It was largely these trees and scrub that were removed. None of the trees that were removed were under tree preservation orders and there are still many trees around the perimeter of the site.

A pre-planning application for a new Clubhouse and tennis court has been submitted to the London Borough of Bromley. Subject to a favourable reply from the Council on the proposals, the Club will proceed with a full planning application for the tennis court immediately. The directors anticipate that it will be possible to proceed with the construction of the new tennis court in spring 2022.

The Club already has sufficient funds to proceed with the tennis court project, which the directors anticipate will cost around £60,000.

If the Council gives a favourable indication for the design and location of the plans for the new Clubhouse, the directors will progress with a full planning application, while at the same time, consider all options for grants and loans. The directors must emphasise that this project can only proceed if financially sustainable. The cost is currently anticipated to be around £750,000.

The Club will need the assistance of members to proceed with this project. A New Clubhouse Project Committee has already been set up and anyone who has the enthusiasm and commitment to assist with fundraising and planning, is invited to join. No previous experience is required, although anyone who does have such experience, would be warmly welcomed. If you are interested, please speak to Dez.

President and Vice Presidents

Shelagh Brooks was appointed as Club President last year and her term lasts for two years, so we do not need to elect a new president until the AGM in 2022. The directors are not proposing that anyone should be elected as a further vice president this year.

Volunteers and Volunteer of the Year Award

During 2020-21 there have been long periods where the Club has been closed and little opportunity for new volunteers to make their mark. The Volunteer of the Year Award is made to someone who has shown outstanding commitment during the year and has not previously won the award.

This year, the directors have asked the members for nominations and the award will be announced at the meeting.

Many volunteers continued to assist the Club during this year, particularly the directors and section committee members, who met regularly via Zoom to consider the government rules and guidance.

A list of the current volunteers is being circulated with the AGM papers. The Club welcomes all volunteers and invites anyone who wishes to become more involved with the Club to contact either me, Dez, one of the directors, or sub-committee members for further information.

Board directors

At the 2020 AGM, following the resignations of David Burrow (Events) and Hamish McDowell (Croquet), two new directors were appointed; Jane Sheridan, as croquet representative, and Keith McMillan, who is the Bar Director. There have been no resignations or new appointments since.

The Club's Articles of Association provide for a third of directors to resign each year in rotation. This year, Raymond Franklin, the Finance Director, Victoria Courtney, the Membership & Marketing Director and me, Gillian Bartlett, as Chair of the Board of Directors, will resign and stand for re-election. Please use your vote to re-elect these directors either at the meeting, or by using the proxy form, either online or hard copy.

Safeguarding and Diversity and Policies

The Club has been taking steps to improve awareness of safeguarding at the Club, with particular emphasis on children and vulnerable persons of all ages. Dez Lewington has completed his training as the Club's Welfare Officer, and Keith McMillan and I have both completed the first stage of the training and have been appointed as Deputy Welfare Officers, to be contacted in Dez's absence.

The Club has Safeguarding and Diversity and Inclusion policies. The Club has also introduced the following policies which are all in the Members' area of the website: Anti-bullying policy, Safe Recruitment policy, Photography and Filming policy, Changing Rooms policy and a Staff Contractor and Volunteer policy. Also, a Conflict of Interest policy has been adopted recently.

In order to improve safeguarding and also security for the site, the Club installed CCTV cameras in the summer of 2021. A Data Impact Assessment was carried out and a CCTV policy was introduced, which is again on the Club's website.

The directors regularly review safeguarding provisions and risk assessments.

Finally

I would like to thank all the people who have helped to keep the Club running so smoothly during the Covid pandemic.

Firstly, thanks to our Club Manager Dez Lewington who worked tirelessly to manage the Club through a very difficult time. Also, thank you to Head Coach Toby Yates, who has managed and expanded the coaching programme, and to all the volunteers, particularly those mentioned above, who have given up a lot of time and energy to help too.

The many new members to the Club may be unaware that, until 2015, the Club was run entirely by volunteers. Dez started as our second part-time Club Manager in April 2016, becoming effectively full-time the following year. Over the last five years, there have been many numerous developments and improvements at the Club, which I do not have space to expand on here.

Despite employing a full-time manager now, the Club still relies strongly on assistance from volunteers. We particularly need new recruits to the bar, squash and tennis sub-committees, which meet regularly to consider issues relating to each section. If you would like to become more involved with the Club, please do not hesitate to contact me, Dez, or one of the other directors, or committee members.

Finally, thank you to all members, both old and new, who have continued to support the Club.

Gillian Bartlett

Chair of the Board of Directors

Sydenham Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club Ltd

8 November 2021

DIRECTORS' ATTENDANCE AT BOARD MEETINGS FROM 1.4.20 to 31.3.21

Director	History	Summoned	Attended	% Ratio
Gillian Bartlett		9	9	100%
Katharine Beaudry		9	7	77.8%
David Burrow	Res. Sept 2020	6	2	33.3%
Victoria Courtney		9	8	88.9%
Ray Franklin		9	8	88.9%
Hamish McDowell	Res. Sept 2020	6	6	100%
Keith McMillan	App. 15.12.20	2	2	100%
Jane Sheridan	App. 15.12.20	2	2	100%
Simon Taylor		9	9	100%

App - appointed

Res - resigned

Sydenham Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club Limited

(limited by guarantee)

DIRECTORS' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2021

The Directors hereby present their 45th report and financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2021.

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: Shelagh Brooks was elected as President at the 2020 AGM and will remain in this post until the 2022 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 served as directors of the Company since 1st April 2020 and currently hold office, unless otherwise indicated below:-

Gillian Bartlett	Raymond Franklin
Katharine Beaudry	Hamish McDowell (resigned September 2020)
David Burrow (resigned September 2020)	Victoria Courtney
Keith McMillan (appointed 15 December 2020)	Jane Sheridan (appointed 15 December 2020)
Simon Taylor	

Gillian Bartlett, Victoria Courtney and Raymond Franklin retire by rotation and will stand for re-election.

BAR COMMITTEE:

In accordance with the relevant statutory requirements, each member of the Bar Committee Keith McMillan and Simon Taylor retires and each stands for re-election. Paulius Kriksciunas has left the Club and therefore cannot be reappointed to the Bar Committee. Vikki Chambers is nominated by the Bar Committee and offers herself for election as a new member

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 9 November 2021.

Gillian Bartlett
Chair