

Sydenham Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club Limited

DIRECTORS' REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2023

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Company information

Registered office: Lawrie Park Road
Sydenham
London
SE26 6ET

Company number: 1280576 (England and Wales)

Chair's Report 2023

The directors look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the Annual General Meeting on 9th November 2023. This is an opportunity for you to meet the directors and other club members, to ask questions and put forward any views you have about the Club. There will be complimentary drinks and nibbles and plenty of time to chat in the bar afterwards.

The business to be conducted will include the presentation of the Club's accounts, the election of one director and the re-election of members of the bar committee. Volunteer awards may be presented and there will be an update on Club developments and an opportunity to ask questions put forward your views.

We do hope that you will attend but, if you are unable to do so, we will have an online proxy form so that you can still participate.

Financial

At the end of the financial year 2022/2023 the Club was in a very healthy position with reserves of over £200k. The income from tennis membership has remained steady and there was an increase in income from squash membership. Together with the income from the coaching programme and lettings, the Club's total income before expenditure amounted to £269,044 which is higher than any previous year in the Club's history.

This positive financial position has enabled the Club to make further investment in the Club's facilities during the year. After all expenditure, and an allowance for depreciation, the accounts for the last financial year still show a surplus of income over expenditure of just under £36,000.

As mentioned later in this report, since the end of the last financial year in April 2023, the Club has also spent a substantial amount on work on the squash court building which has been paid from capital reserves. This still leaves us with sufficient reserves for the new tennis court and refurbishment of existing courts as required, but it will mean that the Club will not be able to commit to any other substantial expenditure until it has replenished those cash reserves.

Last year I reported that the directors were concerned about the rising cost of utility bills and this has proven to be an ongoing problem, particularly in relation to electricity costs. The Club has made savings by the installation of LED lights which are more efficient than the previous halogen lamps. Nevertheless, electricity costs have hit a record high this year. The membership fee currently includes free use of floodlights, which is a benefit unmatched by other Clubs in the area. To keep costs down all members are asked to be particularly vigilant in turning off floodlights after use, or fees may have to increase.

We were hit with a very large bill for water usage last year, which we disputed. After a protracted investigation, the Club successfully obtained a £14k rebate from Castle Water.

Grounds & Tennis Courts

There have been significant facility developments and improvements during 2022/2023.

A major investment during the year was the installation of LED floodlights on courts 6 & 7 at a cost of £12,600, completing the conversion of all seven courts to LED.

Tennis courts 1 & 2, plus the practice wall, were moss treated and pressure cleaned in May 2023, and a new windbreak was installed between the wall and tennis court 2.

Clay courts 6 and 7 were decompacted and relevelled in September 2022 and then the same procedure was carried out on Courts 3,4 6 and 7 at the end of June 2023. All clay courts were then topped up with further artificial clay.

A new path from the squash building to courts 1 & 2 was laid in September 2022 to alleviate the problem of low lying water after rainfall in that area.

During the exceptionally dry summer of 2022, courts 3 & 4 became uneven in places due to ground movement. The Club's court contractor advised the Club to wait and see if there was further movement over the winter months before deciding what remedial action, if any, may be required. The current situation is that the courts have 'rebounded' to a large extent and are playable without hindrance, so we will continue to monitor.

A full tree health survey was commissioned in early 2022 and subsequent work was carried out in addition to the regular tree and hedge maintenance. Work between the croquet lawn and courts 6 & 7 took place in Autumn 2022.

Tennis Court 8

The Board is still going ahead with the plan to build a new tennis court where the croquet lawn was formerly situated. The Club has submitted an application for a Lawful Development Certificate to Bromley Council and is waiting for the result of this application. So long as this certificate is issued, it will not be necessary to proceed with the longer and more complicated application for planning permission. Unfortunately, this process has taken longer than expected, largely due to delays in processing all types of planning applications at Bromley Council and requests for additional information.

The surface will be tarmac, largely because there are many trees in this area of the grounds and it is easier to maintain a hard court than clay. Also, pickleball court lines can be permanently laid onto the courts, which is another area we want to develop. There are no plans for floodlighting.

Once this new court is constructed, the Club will be able to take on more members and the additional fees will assist in increasing the Club's funds for the other developments, including the Clubhouse project mentioned below.

Squash Court Building

The existing building holds two squash courts, changing rooms and toilets, floodlighting controls for tennis courts, and provides a wet weather option for junior tennis coaching. These are important factors to consider in any discussion around development of the Club facilities.

There have been longstanding issues with the squash court building since it was built in the mid-1970s. Underpinning was carried out in the early 1990s, but this did not stabilise the building

permanently and there have been continuous problems with movement and cracking in both the inner and outer walls, particularly in dry and hot summers.

In 2018 and 2022, significant movement occurred, particularly in the south-west corner of the building. In 2022, a large crack opened up inside Court 2 and more cracks appeared on the outer walls. Further, although the floor was playable and not dangerous, by early this year it was becoming more uneven and the ceiling panels in Court 2, in particular, were becoming loose.

As a result of these continuing issues, the directors were concerned that, if the Club did not take any action, eventually it would not be possible to use the building at all. Therefore, they had to weigh up the significant cost of repairing the building against the alternative of taking no action. This could eventually lead to the full closure of the building, which would still incur substantial costs.

Closure of the squash building would involve the loss of the squash section and possibly the changing rooms. In addition, the electrical supply for the floodlights would have to be moved. The Club would also lose the facility to use the building for junior coaching in wet weather. Overall, the financial loss and inconvenience of decommissioning the building would be high.

After considering advice obtained since 2018 from surveyors and specialist contractors, the Board came to the conclusion that the best option, to preserve the squash building for the future, was to stabilise both the foundations and to reinforce the walls.

Accordingly, in April 2023, the Club instructed a specialist company to inject a geopolymer foam under the building in order to support the foundations. Another specialist was then instructed to instal helibars, stainless steel reinforcing rods, into the external south and west walls, as well as the along the crack in the internal wall of court 2. Further, to bind the double walls together, special cable ties were used. This combined approach should limit seasonal movement of the building.

The next stage was to bring the squash courts themselves up to a good standard. The ceiling in court 2 was repaired and secured in June 2023. The replacement of the floors in both courts and essential work to the internal walls is now scheduled to be carried out in October.

The total cost of this work will amount to around £90,000 which, inevitably, will make a significant inroad to the Club's reserves. However, this investment should secure the squash building for many years to come and will mean, not only that the Club will still be able to offer squash as an activity, but the building can continue to be used for the other purposes mentioned above, which will benefit the whole Club.

Having invested heavily in this building, the Club now intends to take steps to attract more squash members and is also looking at ways to raise funds to contribute towards this investment.

Plans for new Clubhouse

At the last AGM I reported that the Club had received the result of their pre-planning application from Bromley Council. The original proposal submitted by the Club included incorporating two squash courts within a new building, in the north-west corner of the grounds behind tennis court 6. The Club wanted to incorporate new squash courts in the building because of concerns over the long-term stability of the existing squash court building. The plan was then to demolish the current squash court building.

The pre-planning advice was that the proposed building would be too large and close to the perimeter, and that it was very unlikely that planning permission would be given for such a structure. Concern was also expressed by the Council about the effect of the proposed building on the tree roots in the area.

In the light of the pre-planning advice, the Board reviewed the plans and decided to remove the squash courts from the new building and consider a one storey structure within the area not affected by the roots of surrounding trees. The Board also decided that the best course of action would be to appoint a specialist planning advisor to review the plans and advise on the way forward.

In view of the decision not to incorporate the squash courts in the new building the Board reviewed the position regarding the stability of the squash court building and, for the reasons set out in the next section of this report, decided carry out significant work to improve this building.

Ray Franklin, the Club's financial director, has recently carried out a projection of the expected financial position of the Club over the next 10 years, based on recent performance. His calculations take into account the expenditure this year on the squash courts building, as well as the capital expenditure that will be required to build a new tennis court and resurface the other courts over the 10 year period.

Ray's conclusions are that the Club could potentially fund a building costing around £200,000 from our own resources to include obtaining grants, where possible. However, to fund a building project on the scale that we were previously considering would certainly mean that the Club would have to take out a commercial loan and considerable effort would be required to raise funds by way of grants and other means. Given the current climate, in terms of increased construction and borrowing costs, as well as our projected income and reduced capital reserves, this would not be possible in the near- mid future.

In view of this advice, the directors have taken the view that it would be necessary to wait many years before it would be possible to fund a new Clubhouse at the top of the site. Bearing in mind the pre-planning advice, which would mean that the building would also have to be much smaller than previously planned, and the uncertainty about the costs of such a project, the Board has had to put this project on hold.

Meanwhile, the directors are looking into the practicalities of an alternative option, which is to convert the men's and women's changing rooms and the workshop in the squash building into a bar/café area, with new toilets and showers. In the longer term, the Club could look to build a second storey with a function area. More details of this new proposal and the financial analysis mentioned above, will be provided at the AGM.

Club Membership

Total Club membership in April 2023 was similar to last year with 661 total members. At the date of this report the total playing members in each category stand at 33 for All Sport, 68 squash, and 328 for tennis.

The junior membership has continued to grow steadily, due to the new coaching membership introduced in 2021, and is now standing at 221.

We have continued to see a lot of interest in tennis membership and are still running a waiting list which has about 70 on it at present. We have had to restrict numbers to ensure fair access to courts for existing members. However, when the new tennis court is completed, we will be able to open up to more members at that stage.

Squash/racketball membership has rebuilt steadily since the fall in numbers over the Covid pandemic. With the improvements to the squash building this year, we hope to attract more members to this section in the next few years.

Tennis section

The tennis section was very active during the year with many new members participating in Club Play, ladders, coaching, club competitions, inter-club leagues and other activities.

The Rungs ladder format has proved to be popular and we currently have the following number of members registered to each ladder: Mixed singles – 130; Off-peak singles – 13; Mixed doubles - 17.

The ladders can only be viewed by participants but there is no limit on who can join, so if any member, who has not joined the ladder yet, wishes to join, or even rejoin, do not hesitate to contact Dez and give it a try. Joining the ladder is an opportunity to find members of a similar standard to practice with, as well as to play matches.

The Annual Club tournaments had increased entries in both 2022 and 2023, including a record 75 in the Men's singles this year. A new 60 & over Mixed doubles event was added this year.

Interclub matches resumed in 2021/2022 following the Covid pandemic and we continue to have three ladies', four men's and one mixed team in the Kent and North Kent leagues both for winter and summer. In Summer 2022, the Mixed team won Kent Division 3, and the Men's 1 won Kent Division 4, beating the Men's 2 team in the play off.

Several new players have joined the teams in the last year and the Club is always looking for new players to join so, if you are interested, please contact Dez who will let you have more information. Many thanks to Katharine Beaudry who continues to organise all the team fixtures.

Club Play on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday continues to be well attended. A new Women's session is starting in October on Friday evening.

The second Bill Buah Memorial Mixed doubles tournament, in memory of the former coach who passed away in 2022, was staged in July 2023 – won by James & Tracey Taylor.

The Tennis Committee meets five or six times a year to consider all issues relating to the tennis section. This year we have been pleased to welcome some new members but we are always looking for new blood who can represent players of all interests and abilities throughout the Club. If you are interested in joining the committee, please contact either Katharine Beaudry, Chair of the committee, Club Manager Dez Lewington, or any other member of the committee. (See Key Roles list attached for details of other committee members)

Squash & Racketball section

The Squash/Racketball and All Sport memberships have gradually increased since the Covid pandemic and the total number of those playing squash and racketball at the Club stands at around 100. There is capacity on the courts to increase membership further and, with the improvements to the squash building and facilities, the Club intends to take positive steps to attract further members.

The Club is offering a 3-year Squash and All Sport membership option – to be paid by a single up-front payment. This benefits the member by locking membership fees for three years, and the Club by front loading membership income in this financial year when substantial expenditure on the building has been incurred. So far, a few members have taken up this offer.

The Club offers a Rungs ladder for squash too with 36 players registered. For racketball there are box leagues with 15 players currently. Squash Club Night is proving increasingly popular after positioning on Wednesday evening.

In 2022 it was decided to hold the finals of the Annual Squash Club tournament and Plate on the Tennis Finals Day in September and this change has been popular. The Racketball tournament and Plate was held from October to December 2022. The winners of both the Squash and Racketball Final was Jake Dodd.

The Squash Committee meets quarterly to discuss squash and racketball matters, including organising the Club tournaments. The committee would welcome more members. If you are interested in joining the committee, please contact either Simon Taylor, Chair of the committee, Club Manager Dez Lewington, or any other member of the committee. (See Key Roles list attached for details of other committee members)

Pickleball

The Club introduced a Pickleball coaching course, followed by a pay and play session in July 2022. There are several regular players and there have been over 150 attendances at club play over the last year.

Some members are trying to set up more pickleball doubles play at other times so, if you are interested, please contact Dez Lewington who will put you in touch with the members concerned.

The Club still plans to include facilities for two Pickleball courts on the new court 8 when this is built.

Activities Programme

The coaching programme for both adults and juniors has continued to thrive with regular coaching lessons throughout the week.

The Club now has three permanent full- and part-time coaches. This year we welcomed Mike Dewar to the coaching team, who is a Level 2 coach training for his Level 3, to support Head Coach Toby Yates (Level 4). Mike is also supervising the Wednesday Club Play.

Club Coach Bruce Thomson (Level 3), who left in September 2023, has been an integral part of the team since reopening after Covid. He is joining Bromley Tennis Centre and we wish him every success, and thank him for all his work over the last few years.

Club member Luis Perez, who is also a level 3 coach, is providing additional individual coaching on Monday afternoon, as the existing team cannot handle all demand. Luis will take over many of Bruce's coaching groups when he leaves to ensure we maintain our full coaching programme.

The adult group coaching programme has 60 players attending across eight groups, plus many others attending pay-as-you-play community drop-in classes, with up to seven sessions per week.

There are currently over 200 children in the junior coaching membership scheme, receiving approximately 38 lessons per year as part of their membership. School holiday camps also remain very popular; the recent Summer Camp had between 35-45 children attending every day over five weeks, bringing in around £18k income for the Club. Fun Friday after school club continues term-time for 3-14 year olds.

James Brownsdon joined us to provide squash and racketball coaching. He teaches individuals and has completed several beginners' introductory courses.

Bar/Reception

Bar opening times have been gradually extended to 10.00pm Monday to Thursday. From September the bar also opened from 4.00-6.00pm. Club Manager Dez Lewington also opens the bar most weekends until 3.00pm. Remember that, apart from drinks and snacks, the bar sells all types of balls and a range of accessories.

Two bar/reception staff are employed, under new terms from 1 April 2023, to provide extra duty manager support for the clubhouse and facilities. Abbie has been with us for a number of years now, and was joined by Matt earlier this year.

The bar area has been refurbished, in particular more comfortable seating was acquired. Also, repairs to the structure were undertaken and additional insulation was added to the walls. Hopefully, this investment will encourage more use of the bar facilities.

The Bar Committee has been instrumental in planning the events programme this year and plans to do the same for next year. If you are interested in joining the committee, please contact either Keith McMillan, Chair of the committee, Club Manager Dez Lewington, or any other member of the committee. (See Key Roles list attached for details of other committee members)

Sporting and Social Events

Since the full lifting of Covid restrictions the Club has been able to offer both sporting and social events for members again.

During 2022/2023 the Club has run several American Doubles Tennis Tournaments for all standards of play. For those who have not participated to date, these consist of five 15 minute matches with the pairs splitting up after each round, followed by a social in the bar.

The Club also participated in the inaugural adult Road to Wimbledon competition at Easter 2023, following which two members, Barbara Cavanagh and Anna Daniel, actually got to play on the grass courts at Wimbledon by qualifying through the regional tournament.

We have also run several non-sporting events. Our regular quizmaster Jeff Richards has returned and has run three quiz nights over the last year, with another scheduled for October 2023.

The Coronation 'Street' Party on 7th May 2023 was very well attended event with adults and children enjoying mini tennis, pickleball and table tennis as well as homemade food.

Other events have included a Christmas Party, Summer BBQ, and a beer festival in conjunction with BR3WERY from Beckenham.

Facilities Hire

Witty Kiddies continue to provide a full nursery service, with baby care and early drop off/late collection. They operate from 8.00am – 6.00pm every weekday, including during the school holidays. This is a great community service as well as a significant source of income.

Rivers of Jordan Ministries continue to use the hall for church services on Sunday, and a new Pilates instructor has started teaching on Saturday lunchtime.

Prior to constructing the new tennis court, Cwtches Dog Training are continuing to use the former croquet area for behaviour courses and sessions.

Appointment of Directors

The Articles of Association were changed last year to provide that directors should be elected for a three year fixed term. This replaced the previous rule that a third of the directors should resign each year and be re-elected by rotation.

This change to the rules means that the terms of three of the directors, Gillian Bartlett, Victoria (Vikki) Courtney and Raymond Franklin will run until the AGM in 2024, as they were re-elected by rotation in 2021. Katharine Beaudry, Keith McMillan and Simon Taylor stood for re-election at the 2022 AGM and their three year fixed terms run to the 2025 AGM;

At the last AGM, Victoria (Vikki) Chambers, who is also a member of the Bar Committee expressed an interest in joining the Board and she was co-opted by the Board as a director in February 2023. She is currently the Premises Director, supporting the Club Manager Dez Lewington. Under the Articles Vikki must be elected by the members as a director at the AGM and she is therefore standing for election for a three year term at the meeting.

Volunteer Recognition Award/ Special Recognition Award

At the AGM last year, a resolution was passed to remove Vice-Presidents/ Presidents from the Articles. In conjunction with this change, the directors proposed a revised award system to replace the Volunteer of the Year Award introduced in 2010. The new awards are a Volunteer Recognition Award (VRA) and a new Special Recognition Award (SRA).

Since the AGM, the Board has approved the criteria for the two new awards and the procedure to be followed for making the awards and these have been circulated via a newsletter and nominations have been requested from members.

The new Volunteer Recognition Award recognises short and longer term contributions to the Club and will be considered each year, subject to a suitable nominee being approved. The Special Recognition Award will be awarded when a volunteer has given especially outstanding service to the Club over a very long period of time. It is not expected that this will be a regular annual award.

The Board expect to be in a position to make awards under both categories this year.

Volunteers

A list of the current key role holders is being circulated with the AGM papers. The Club is always looking for volunteers to help with the Club, whether on a long term, or a one-off basis.

There are two sports committees, for tennis and squash, as mentioned earlier in this report. These committees discuss all aspects of the running of their section activities at the Club and always welcome new members.

The Bar Committee discusses and promotes issues relating to the bar and events and also welcomes new members.

The Board is always looking for new directors who are interested in improving and promoting the Club. If you would like to consider joining the Board, please speak to, or email me, or one of the other directors, or Dez Lewington and we can provide you with some further information.

If you would like to volunteer in any way at all please speak to, or email Dez, or any of the volunteers on the Key Roles List.

Safeguarding and Diversity and Policies

To remind everyone that the Welfare Officer of the Club is Dez Lewington and the current deputies are myself and Keith McMillan. If anyone else would like to consider being a deputy Welfare Officer then please contact Dez. You would need to obtain a DBS check from the LTA and undertake regular courses run by the LTA.

The Safeguarding Policy and the Diversity policy are in the foyer and on the Club's website. Several other relevant policies and the bye-laws of the Club are all in the members' area of the website.

Memorials

This year sadly we had to report on the death of one of our previous longstanding members Andrew Lewis. Andrew was an enthusiastic tennis player participating in club teams, leagues, and tournaments. He joined the Board as Events and Marketing Director in 2004 and served as Club Chair between 2008 and 2010. Some of the previous and current members organised a memorial

event at the Club to celebrate Andrew's life on 15th April 2023 which was also attended by members of Andrew's family.

Following this event, Andrew's mother Jane generously offered to donate a bench to the Club in Andrew's memory. This has now been installed and is situated by courts 6 and 7 and will be well used by Club members and parents watching the junior coaching. The Club would like to thank Jane very much for her generosity.

I also reported last year on the death of Alastair Putt who passed away in August 2022. His family have generously donated money for two trophies for the annual squash and racketball tournaments, as mentioned earlier in this report for which the Squash Section is very grateful.

Thank you

The Board would like to thank Club Manager Dez Lewington who continues to manage all operations, including all the facility upgrades, the application for the new tennis court, all hire arrangements, activities, marketing and much more!

Many thanks also go to the Club's coaching team, led by Toby Yates, for all their hard work. Also, thanks go to the grounds/maintenance contractors and bar/reception staff who have kept the Club running so smoothly.

Finally, thank you to the many volunteers who have given up their time to help the Club in so many ways. The Club could not operate without you!

Gillian Bartlett

Club Chair

gillian.bartlett@sltcc.co.uk

Date 3rd October 2023

DIRECTORS' ATTENDANCE AT BOARD MEETINGS FROM 1.4.22 TO 31.3.23

Director	History	Summoned	Attended	% Ratio
Gillian Bartlett		5	5	100%
Katharine Beaudry		5	5	100%
Victoria Chambers	Appointed 6FEB23	1	1	100%
Victoria Courtney		5	4	80%
Ray Franklin		5	4	80%
Keith McMillan		5	4	80%
Jane Sheridan	Resigned 3NOV22	3	3	100%
Simon Taylor		5	4	80%

Sydenham Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club Limited

DIRECTORS' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2023

The Directors hereby present their 47th report and financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2023.

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.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: The following served as directors of the Company since 1st April 2022 and currently hold office, unless otherwise indicated below:-

Gillian Bartlett
Katharine Beaudry
Victoria Courtney
Simon Taylor

Raymond Franklin
Victoria Chambers (Appointed Feb 2023)
Keith McMillan
Jane Sheridan (Resigned Nov 2022)

Following resolutions passed at last year's AGM, each director is appointed for a term of three years, after which time each director may be re-elected.

Gillian Bartlett, Victoria Courtney and Raymond Franklin stood for re-election at the 2021 AGM. Accordingly, their three year fixed term runs to the 2024 AGM;

Katharine Beaudry, Keith McMillan and Simon Taylor stood for re-election at the 2022 AGM and their three year fixed term runs to the 2025 AGM;

Victoria Chambers was co-opted to the Board in January 2023. She stands for election at this AGM for a three year fixed term to the 2026 AGM. This requires an Ordinary resolution with a simple majority of those present at the AGM.

If anyone would like to be considered for a director's post, for which they would have to be elected by the members, please speak to one of the current Board members, or to Dez Lewington who will provide further information.

BAR COMMITTEE:

In accordance with the relevant statutory requirements, each member of the Bar Committee, Victoria Chambers, Keith McMillan, Stephen Rhoden and Simon Taylor retires and each stand 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 3rd October 2023.

Gillian Bartlett, Chair