



ANNUAL REPORT

2019/20

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Jeremy Goulding

Dear members, it has been almost 16 months since our last AGM, and while the finances you will see reported are for 2019, much of this report concerns how Covid19 has impacted your club. And at the outset, let me make special mention of Andy Ewings, Jeremy Labram, Rupert Larkin, Julian Moore, James Scully and Philip Torjussen with deep thanks for their efforts as our Covid19 response team, and for the way that they have impressively navigated the club through this situation so far.

Reading through these reports you will find that we had a very successful year in so many respects, and that notwithstanding Covid19 there are many activities again underway. Our finances are in excellent shape and underpin our ability to continue to invest in facilities for our enjoyment and use.

Yet coming into the AGM, other than the finances of our club, perhaps the most important thing is for us to have volunteers who want to make a contribution and who can positively influence the way we do things at Lansdown. My personal thanks go to everyone who has helped throughout the last year, as Lansdown would not be able to function without you.

Now let me make a request: you will see notices for committee member nominations circulating in due course in advance of the AGM, so please take some time to consider if it could be you helping out this coming year. The committee has roles that focus on Tennis, Squash, Croquet and the club facilities, and roles of Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer. These are open to every member to stand for. We also have 4 committee slots without portfolio and we will be asking one of those to contribute to marketing and promotion of Lansdown, we'll ask another to focus on members' interests, a members representative role that gives members a focal point for expressing views that can thereby ease the burden on the General manager, another to focus on future development, and perhaps another to focus on social activities and internal communications. There are several other areas where we would very much welcome help, like strengthening our accountability for governance, compliance and risk management, particularly relevant as we navigate our way through Covid19 restrictions. And if you don't feel that you can be a part of the management committee, there are several sub-committees that beaver away in the background too. What could you offer?

If you feel that you would like to give something back to help the club, please have a conversation with me or anyone else on the committee, and do that in the next few weeks before nominations close on 16th September. Also, if you have a Resolution that you wish to propose, please do this as soon as possible as any Resolution adds significantly to work for the office prior to the AGM, and it must in any event be submitted by 8th September.

The information pack following gives you an update about all activities at the club since the last AGM, the 2019 Accounts and everything you need for the AGM.

I am looking forward to seeing and hearing Andy Ewings deliver his Chairman's report – I hope you will be able to join via a computer screen at 7.00 pm on 24th September too.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mark Groves

The profit on club activities in 2019 was £79,903 which was £13,657 higher than 2018, so this has allowed us to build a strong cash position to weather the current storms.

Subscription income was up by £12,704 at £280,671, and this allowed us to not take an increase in subs in 2020.

Coaching fees were £26,921 a reduction of £5,805 on 2018 but this was mainly a timing factor.

The loss on the cafe/bar was reduced by £8,276 from 2018 but still came in at £9,033.

In terms of our costs, sports and ground maintenance reduced by £5,886 to £16,928 and expenditure on the clubhouse increased by £5,779 to £36,065.

Management and reception costs were down by £6,430 to £63,419 as we managed without a person in administration.

On the balance sheet we have an interest free LTA loan which at the 2019 year end stood at £70,400 and is being repaid at £13,600 per year. We put a further just over £24,000 into the sinking fund which is to allow for future projects. I am pleased to report that at the end of 2019 our cash balance was £389,996. This enables us to be in a position to discuss future capital projects.

In light of the Covid19 situation, an attempt is made here to provide an update the 2020 financial position.

- In the first 6 months of 2020 our subscription income declined by 5.5% reflecting lower membership numbers in children and social categories and because more than normal new adult members have opted to pay monthly. However, to only have a 5.5% reduction is good news in the current environment.
- Coaching income is down by 70% to £4,129.
- We have received a business support grant of £25,000.
- On costs, the maintenance spend has increased by £10,923 as we spent over £10,000 on a new boiler and over £5,000 on the car park re-surface.
- Our administration staff costs were down by £6,227 as we did not have a second person in the office.
- General costs were down by £9,721 to £14,590.
- Bar losses in the first half year were £15,151 as we continued to pay staff through the pandemic and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme monies only partially offset this cost. Clearly, we cannot continue at this level and a thorough review of what we provide will be undertaken.

Most importantly our cash position of £517,038 at the end of June means that we are in strong position to discuss continued upgrading of club facilities in 2021.

TENNIS/ TENNIS COACHING

Rupert Larkin

It has been another busy year for the tennis committee with several changes of personnel. We thank Chris Bannister who remains on the committee but elected to stand down as Tennis Secretary, being replaced by Rupert Larkin who joined. We also welcomed Seth Cunningham and Vivienne Maddox, the latter as a proxy for Nicola Maddox who sadly moved out of the area. We are also grateful to Emma Bannister who stood down this year.

As with any new team, it took a little while to gain momentum, but the group are now settled into a good rhythm. All committee members have contributed valuable time and effort, with several naturally adopting informal roles which has greatly improved our efficiency and helped us to progress certain goals. For instance, Seth Cunningham & Eleanor Bird have stepped in as Club Captains to manage the teams, Richard Luetchford is overseeing clay court maintenance, Jeremy Labrams has spearheaded a new Tennis Improvement Programme and both Eleanor and Richard are overseeing the recently introduced Club Mixer sessions.

In keeping with previous years, our primary objective as a committee has been the provision of social, accessible and inclusive tennis for all members, regardless of playing standard. This philosophy is particularly important to sustain whilst we navigate the Coronavirus pandemic which disproportionately threatens social and large group tennis. As such, the group is working hard on sustaining and adapting popular pre-existing tennis-related activities to be 'COVID-secure', whilst also designing and implementing a number of new initiatives aimed at strengthening the Club's tennis offering. It has been great to see members taking advantage of these opportunities in recent weeks so we encourage anyone interested to get involved. Similarly, if you have ideas that you'd like to see at the club then have a chat with one of the tennis committee who will be glad to help!

Tennis Improvement Programme

The current tennis contract with TT Tennis sees the Club pay a retainer in return for certain services from Tom and his team. This arrangement was re-examined by the tennis committee to ensure the investment continues to provide good value and widespread benefit to the membership. This process gave birth to an ambitious Tennis Improvement Programme which aims to improve the tennis offer to members. For the purposes of this exercise we segmented members into several groups and considered their needs and how well they are being fulfilled. This has led to a set of objectives for each which will require additional services from TT Tennis and may require additional funding to deliver the best of the current services as well as the chosen new ones. Unfortunately, with the arrival of the Coronavirus pandemic, much of this programme has been impossible to launch but we are actively working to introduce selected components as the situation allows. I would like to thank Jeremy Labrams, James Scully and Tom Therrien for their hard work on this project.

Clubplay

Clubplay participation has declined in recent years despite several successful initiatives such as occasional coach led sessions. The tennis committee considered this cause for concern given

that Clubplay has historically been a well subscribed staple in the tennis calendar which offered our members inclusive, social and accessible tennis all year round. As such, improving Clubplay participation is a key objective in the Tennis Improvement Programme.

Clubplay was forced to stop during lockdown but has more recently been allowed to restart under certain 'Covid-secure' conditions as specified by the LTA. This prompted the introduction of new Club Mixer sessions which run every Saturday afternoon in a hybrid of our previous Clubplay and Jill Kingaby's renowned Social Tournament formats. It has been really encouraging to see these sessions fully subscribed so far with many players enjoying a drink at the bar afterwards. We also have several other promising ideas proposed for launch once Coronavirus restrictions allow, including season openers, regular coach led sessions and periodic special events.

Watch this space and get signed up to a Club Mixer in the meantime!

Teams

Lansdown has a number of teams in various winter and summer leagues, offering members a chance to play friendly but competitive tennis against nearby clubs. Our teams are open to all members and we are always hopeful for new players so if you are interested in team tennis then please contact either Seth Cunningham (Men's Captain) or Eleanor Bird (Ladies Captain) who will be delighted to get you involved.

Lansdown were very successful in the Avon LTA Summer League with the Men's 2nd, 3rd and 4th teams achieving promotion from divisions 3B, 5B and 9B respectively. The Ladies 1st and 2nd teams did well to retain their positions in divisions 2B and 3B. Disappointingly, the Men's 1st team were relegated from Division 1, bringing an end to a long run of top flight status. We are hopeful however that both the Men's and Ladies 1st teams can achieve promotion back to Division 1, particularly with the aid of new initiatives in the Tennis Improvement Programme.

Lansdown again battled it out in the Avon LTA Winter Mixed League which is always popular with the more diehard players. Unfortunately, the league was suspended early due to the arrival of Coronavirus and it has not yet been confirmed how the final standings will be calculated. At the point of suspension, the 2nd team were doing excellently and were on course to achieve promotion from division 3B. The 1st team were heading for relegation from Division 1 which was a little disheartening having won the top division last year. Assuming the above results are confirmed by the League, the 1st and 2nd teams will be in parallel divisions this coming winter.

Following a strong showing in 2018, Lansdown entered five teams into the Chippenham & District Tennis League, headed by Jessica Kingscote. Last summer brought yet more success with the Men's A team winning promotion from division 6 and the Ladies C team being promoted from division 4. The Ladies A and B teams retained their positions in division 1 and 2 respectively, whilst the Mixed team stayed in division 4.

The Vets Mixed teams met tough opposition throughout their season. The 1st team were unfortunately relegated from Division 2 whilst the 2nd team remained in Division 3.

Lansdown Juniors were heavily involved in the Avon summer and winter divisions once again. We had Girls and Boys teams competing in age groups 10U - 16U and are extremely grateful to the parents and coaches who helped run the teams. Notable results include the 10U Mixed team who achieved promotion from summer division 2B and the 14U Boys team who won winter division 1. The 2019 Junior Club Tournament also saw some great matches and excellent tennis - well done to those who played and TT tennis for organising.

After a long suspension of league tennis, we were delighted to see the start of the friendly Avon Lockdown League in late July with Lansdown entering two mixed teams - good luck guys!

Adult team training is also due to resume mid-August on Thursday evenings.

Box Leagues

The box league has gone from strength to strength since Eleanor Bird took over as coordinator in 2017. Following consultation, the scoring pattern was changed in July 2018 to enable more appropriate promotion and relegation so that players are more quickly matched to opponents of a similar standard.

There is a relatively settled pattern of six boxes per year, each roughly eight weeks long, with a new break in play during early summer to make room for the Club Tournament.

The 2020 February-March boxes came to an abrupt end due to the Coronavirus lockdown but play cautiously restarted from mid-June. The June-July boxes saw the introduction of the Fast4 format in order to reduce match length, minimise the impact on court availability for other members and due to uncertain toilet access with the clubroom closed!

12 players from the February - March boxes didn't continue post-lockdown boxes, however an amazing 26 players joined to make a record total of 98 players, with a healthy 89% of possible matches being played. 100 players are taking part in the newly released August-September boxes which have returned to a normal sets format but with provision for shortening the second set to allow matches to be contained within a 1.5 hour booking period where possible.

The box leagues are a great opportunity to stretch your legs with friendly singles matches so why not sign up today? Contact Eleanor Bird if you fancy a run out!

Social Tournaments

Three Social Tournaments ran in July, September and October 2019, organised and coordinated by Jill Kingaby to whom we are very grateful. These events are always a massive highlight in the calendar and once again proved extremely popular as all slots were filled quickly. Players battled it out in all sorts of weather conditions as Autumn hit and there were some quite remarkable scenes. Great fun was had by all and we can't wait to see the return of these events in due course - keep your eyes peeled!

Club Tournament

The tennis committee made the difficult decision of postponing the 2020 Club Tournament owing to the Coronavirus pandemic. This is a real shame considering the success of the 2019 tournament which saw a very large entry and captured the attention of the Club for several weeks. There may be scope to organise a Winter Claycourt Tournament instead so stay sharp.

SQUASH AND RACKETBALL REPORT

Julian Moore

Despite the recent Coronavirus pandemic, it has been an excellent year for squash and racquetball at Lansdown. The partnership between Lansdown and Elite squash continues to grow steadily with John Welton continuing to provide excellent coaching to all levels and abilities.

Congratulations to the Men's team who have shown great consistency by winning the Autumn League for the first time since the 1990's and were sitting pretty at the top of the league before squash was halted in March. The Ladies have struggled to find consistency this season.

In February we had the pleasure of welcoming Nick Matthew and Eain Yow Ng to Lansdown. Nick, having retired as the most successful English player and Yow, the former Junior World Champion, were part of an adult squash coaching camp run by Elite Squash. A ballot was held and 12 lucky club members had the opportunity to play either Nick or Yow. Having played the members, they then played an exhibition match, spent time chatting to members before finishing off with a Q and A session in the bar. It was a memorable day for the Club, highlighting our facilities and our ability to host such a prestigious event.

The Racquetball Championships were held in February attracting 32 entrants, playing the Monrad system, giving everyone 6 games with a finals night ensuring lots of games and spectators for the final which was contested between John Welton and Will Kingwell. After a gruelling first game with many 50 shot rallies, which could have gone either way, Will eventually won this game and went on to win the match 3-0, the score line does not reflect the quality and effort of both players. The B Grade final was a family affair between Josh and Julian Kashdan-Brown with the youngster enjoying bragging rights after a comfortable win over his father.

In March, Lansdown hosted the Avon County Closed, a graded Tournament eagerly awaited in the squash calendar. This year there were 65 entrants including many from Lansdown. The tournament was organised once again by John Welton and was held over 2 days. The Ladies B grade final was between our very own Wendy Harrison and Quita Colston, with Wendy coming out on top. Tim Jones made it to the final of the Mens O45, before losing to Mike Nicholls. The Avon County Closed final was between last year's winner John Welton and Dave Allman, Dave running out as a 3-1 winner. For Lansdown it was a great success, showcasing our facilities and our ability to host squash tournaments.

Squash was suspended for 4 months following the Covid19 pandemic; happily it has returned, albeit in a reduced format.

CROQUET REPORT

Howard Grove

Since the lockdown period began we have followed the government's regulations as interpreted by the Croquet Association. This brought about two main changes to our normal routine.

The regulations require that all play must be organised through a booking system which we successfully run in-house, and this also ensures that members who are particularly concerned, or who are listed as shielded, can be confident that they can play without meeting anyone else other than their chosen playing partner. This feeling of confidence is greatly enhanced by allowing croquet members to access the lawn directly through the Richmond Road entrance via a coded lock, thereby removing the possibility of having to pass others when on route from the carpark. These changes mean that out of a membership of 36 we now have 26 playing regularly.

There has been little enthusiasm among our members to engage in competition because that would require members playing against others who may not be in their chosen 'bubble'. We are hoping that with luck and a vaccine it will be different next year.

Further improvements have been made to the croquet facilities for this year. The arresting fence at the back of the lawn, which had become something of a hazard to players, has been replaced, overhanging shrubbery has been cut back, a water supply has been extended to the croquet lawn, the equipment hut has had a new roof fitted and the broken paving around it is about to be replaced. With the combined effects of Clive's (the groundsman) efforts and the reduced footfall, the lawn is in very good shape. Speaking as someone who has played at around a dozen other clubs in the southwest the Lansdown Croquet facilities, allowing for the fact that the lawn is slightly less than regulation size, ranks very highly.

GROUNDS AND CLUBHOUSE REPORT

David Barnes

Properly in the history of the Club, this year has been unprecedented, with the outbreak of "Coronavirus" leading to the lockdown of the Club and all its facilities. The good news is; the Club is hopefully and gradually returning to normal.

This period of lockdown has given us a window of opportunity to refurbish and renew essential facilities within the Club. The scope of works for this are set out below. The Club also has a responsibility to meet our compliance obligations and facilitate any urgent works needed.

Minor Works - every day running of the Club

We have a tradesman on board to facilitate small minor works, as and when needed.

Maintenance contracts are in place for our Mechanical/Electrical (ME) services.

Legionella testing of our water systems.

Robust procedures to meet our statutory compliance obligations.

Major Works Completed

Car park partially re-surfaced including white lining of car park spaces.

Installation of new long wave radiant cassette heaters for Squash Courts 1 & 4.

New central heating system consisting of two new boilers, associated equipment and new radiators.

Thermostatic temperature zoning of male/female change areas, squash lobby area, lounge and office, excluding the main corridor which not possible to zone.

New front door to main entrance.

Major Works Refurbishment

Complete refurbishment of the male and female change and shower areas. This work is still ongoing and is estimated to finish in the next two weeks.

Main corridor, new ceiling and lighting completed, painting of corridor walls and doors completed. Laying of new corridor flooring to be completed.

New extraction fans on Squash Courts 1 and 4 currently being installed.

Inspection Building and Grounds

A full inspection of the building internally/externally plus grounds is carried out every April and September. Full report submitted.

Voluntary Work by members

Unfortunately, our two constant gardeners David Blake and Barbara Gooch have retired. I thank them on behalf of the Club for their unstinting work in “creating” and nurturing the beautiful flower borders around the west side of the club house.

Conclusion

Unprecedented year “YES” but with all of us working together the CLUB will come through this stronger. I therefore submit this yearly report to the committee.

GENERAL MANAGER’S REPORT

Philip Torjussen

I think ‘challenging’ would be the best way to report on 2019 and the first 8 months of 2020.

As you know, during 2019, I had the support of Christine in the office and since she left in January, it has been difficult to meet the needs of the committee and membership as a whole but I hope that we will back to offering a ‘normal’ service as soon as possible.

The new opening hours for the office where we were open until 7.00 pm on several days of the week and most Saturday mornings went well and I believe this enabled us to communicate better with you all. When we are back to normal staffing, we will look at ensuring that we are available at busy times to assist you.

The renewal process has worked well and we appreciated your patience during the busy time when this was happening.

We underwent some changes to the clubroom in terms of staffing and opening hours and I appreciated the help from Jo during this time. The situation with Covid19 hasn't helped and I know that all the staff found being furloughed quite difficult. It has been good to see them coming back into club life slowly and I know they appreciate the welcome that they have received.

The events that were held during 2019 were all generally well supported and Jo and her staff have worked hard to provide the very best in terms of food quality at an affordable price. When we can, it would be good to host some regular social events so please let us know what you would like to see happening at YOUR club.

We have continued to introduce various changes to the way we deal with the administration of the office so that we are more efficient on the accounting and membership administration. More needs to be done and when we are back to normal staffing, we will continue with this process. We have continued to provide news to you all through our regular newsletter which I hope you find useful.

I am very grateful to David Barnes who has assisted me in the ongoing maintenance of the Club. Some of these projects take a great deal of time and energy and we have tried, wherever possible, to ensure that you are not inconvenienced when the work is done. David's assistance has been invaluable.

Finally, there are a number of volunteers who assisted in the refurbishments of the club during the lockdown, the health and safety of our members during the last six months and the assistance in running tennis and squash tournaments, special events – including hosting an exhibition day and evening with the ex-world squash champion. These events just would not happen if it wasn't for these members who really go out of their way to provide the best the club can have. Thank you to them.

Thank you also to the tennis and squash coaches who have also gone out of their way to provide good service to the Club and during 2019, we benefitted from some good income as a result.

Finally, to the two 'heroes' who have battled in the cold, the wet and brilliant sunshine to keep our gardens up to date and in excellent order. I hope Barbara and David will enjoy their retirement and we are currently looking at the recruitment of some gardeners who will attempt to continue their great work.
