

Chesham 1879 – 2021/22 AGM

Agenda:

- Apologies for Absence
- Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)
- Matters Arising – not covered by subsequent items
- Club Chairman's Report
- Tennis Chairman's Report
- Squash Chairman's Report
- Finance Report and Approval of accounts for 2020/21
- Election of Officers
- Election of Committees (Squash and Tennis AGMs at the same time)
- Election of Auditor
- Vote on any motions put forward beforehand
- Any Other Business (including suggestions from members for consideration by the Committee(s))

Here are the reports from each of the club chairpersons for you to read at your leisure before or after the AGM

CLUB CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Thankyous

First of all, thanks must be extended to many different people for the efforts and support during the last 12 months of continued uncertainty.

I will mention some people individually at the end of the meeting but the many people who thanks should go to include you, the members, who have supported us and followed all the regulations that we have been asked to impose to keep everyone safe. You have continued your membership and come back to the club to enjoy it's facilities again in your numbers, which is fantastic to see. Thanks should also go to the many volunteers who are working behind the scenes on the committees and managing the leagues, tournaments, social and teams and also those looking after the clubhouse and facilities, the bar and the grounds around the site. Thanks also go to the finance team who gather all the relevant costs and expenditure, track the income from membership, bar and other sources and then prepare the accounts for the club. Enormous thanks go especially to Tamara Ferguson.

We are hopefully coming out of this uncertain time and can start to get back to some sort of normality and plan much further ahead than the next one or two months and we hope that the next 12 months will be a very exciting time for the club.

New Administrator and Membership Secretary

After many years in her role as club administrator and membership secretary Tamara has decided to step down to create some time for herself and family. We all want to offer our thanks and gratitude to Tamara for the many, many hours and years of dedication that she has given to the club. Tamara has handed over these duties to our newly appointed team member Amelia Holder.

Tamara has worked tirelessly sending out all club communications and answering all club enquiries as well as managing the membership renewals and many other additional tasks.

Welcome Amelia!

Tennis and Squash

Both the tennis and squash chairmen will highlight all jobs undertaken and planned in their individual presentations. The courts continue to be monitored and upgraded at planned intervals

It is very clear that both tennis and squash at the club have excellent coaching teams. The individual reports will cover this but there have been many reports of excellent courses, new members enjoying great advice, teaching and support in their journey with each sport.

The success of the many junior and beginner courses clearly demonstrate how valuable these professionals and volunteers are to our club. Thank you to both teams.

1879 Club Grounds

For many years now, but more specifically during lockdown until now, Julia Bullmore has been working very hard, along with Steve Ramsden to ensure that the grounds are maintained to an excellent standard.

The improvement plan has also been very dynamic, opening up the water around the club, including the small pond area at the front and opening up the river for all to see the full extent of the newly flowing water.

Julia's new planting around the trees, the water, the clubhouse and the summerhouse has made the club a beautiful place to spend time in.

Julia has been excellent at finding volunteers to help to clear the weeds on the bank and in the river and there are continuing plans to clear the river banks around the whole club and the river itself and to plant the banks with more shrubs and flowers.

Security (Fencing, CCTV)

During the various Lockdowns the club became a venue for walkers, picnickers and also groups of teenagers and adults illegally meeting when the members were not present.

This continued even after the club reopened and it was decided to build a perimeter fence to outline the private property and also increase the security by installing several CCTV cameras around the clubhouse/car park.

This has thankfully improved the security and reduced the number of trespassers to the property when the club is closed.

Car Parking

There are several alternative plans to help provide more efficient and better car parking options at the club. These include, marking out spaces on the ground along the defined parking areas help make better use of the parking area and also trying to create a layout which opens up some additional new spaces.

Bird boxes

The team who installed the original bird and owl boxes on a number of trees around the club have been to clean out and re-set these boxes for this year's breeding season. We expect to receive reports and photographs later in the year showing the degree of activity and success.

Improvement of outdoor seating areas

During the restricted time at the club, we enhanced the outdoor areas to allow members and guests to spend safe time outside. Since many people continue to prefer to spend time outside we have invested further in the outdoor area and expect to continue this.

Canopies

The club purchased two Gazebos as temporary cover for people last winter and currently there are no plans to remove these.

Seating

Additional picnic tables have been purchased and there is a plan to buy 4-5 more to distribute around the riverbank and by the coaching court so that more people can enjoy the outdoor spaces around the Club when the weather improves.

Heaters

Outdoor patio heaters were purchased before Christmas to provide outdoor heat for people in the evenings during the colder weather. These will be strictly controlled and only used when needed for special events. For both economy and sustainability/environmental reasons the control of the heaters will be tightly monitored.

Our Land Across the River

We have spoken to the Council about building a simple bridge across the river to replace one which is on the Deeds and must have existed in the very distant past. If we can replace this we will be able to cross the river on foot or with the sit on mower. Based on discussions so far, we believe that this will need a planning application and a bridge design. However, we will continue to work on this to see whether a bridge can be built simply to replace the original bridge without going through the process.

Once built, this land will be tidied and there are several ideas on how to use it – for example natural wilding/wildlife areas; planting flowers and providing seating for members etc.

Health/safety

Defib training – We have very kindly been offered free training on the defibrillator (by Scotty – Matt Graham’s partner) for all members and officers who want to know exactly what to do and how to use this piece of equipment at the club in case of an emergency. This is planned for all who want it. Some suggested dates will be circulated. Please sign up if you would like to attend.

Key officials and some members have been trained to support any members who have any health related problems whilst at the club – this programme will be expanded to more people so that there are also confident and trained people at the club to help other members in case of any medical emergency.

Bar

The bar has been improved, maintained and run very ably by Sheila and her team of volunteers. They have worked strictly within all the guidelines set by the government, sports bodies and more directly the club committees. All necessary precautions have been taken and signage and equipment updated to ensure that all members knew exactly what they could and could not do.

The turnover and profitability of the bar have increased as a result of this to the benefit of the club. We intend to open the bar on a regular basis. Normal staffed opening times are shown on the information screen at the front of the club.

New Social Committee and Programme

We have a new energetic, creative and motivated young social committee. They are a breath of fresh air to all of us and have already organised and run a new event at Christmas and have helped and supported with one of our established events on Bonfire night which collectively made it a huge success.

We are looking forward to a year of buzz and activities around the club all year round. The plan will be to run 4-5 main events across the year and to create and facilitate more informal and low key events.

The events will cater for different groups of people so that there s always something that some people may want to join in at the club with if they want to and have time. These will include sports events (playing and watching), educational (possibly talks and classes/teaching), entertainment (live music, comedy/performance etc), celebratory (food and drink) and other

The club social calendar will be shown on the website and will also be displayed within the club. The next event is a quiz night on 12th March.

Padel update

As you all know, an EGM last year approved a proposal to give Game4Padel a contract to install 2 Padel courts at the club.

The committee has since negotiated and signed a contract between the club and Game4Padel.

A consultation evening was held for neighbours and local residents to see the plans prior to a planning application

A formal Planning Application was submitted to the council by G4P before Christmas. The planners considered this and recently rejected this first application on the grounds that the proposed canopy was not consistent with Green Belt and AONB policies.

This is disappointing but **not the end of the process**. Game4Padel has provided an alternative, lower and more open canopy design and are intending to discuss this with the Planners. the club a new, more discrete canopy to look at and have **also said that they will be happy to fund 2 open courts as an alternative** if this is what is needed to obtain the planning permission.

The next step is for G4P to speak to the planner and decide whether to reapply with a different canopy or simply apply for 2 open, uncovered courts

Finance Overview

The more detailed finance report prepared by Claire Moore and others is below, but I want to highlight one or two key points:

- *Healthy financial position thanks to grants and members' generosity and support*
- *Key issues and challenges ahead eg Tennis court plans either with or without Padel, car park and other improvements, inflation increasing overhead costs.*

We have a 10 year finance and development plan to help assess the cash impact of significant capital and maintenance expenditure which is constantly being updated as situations change and new plans emerge.

The plan currently has a Padel and no Padel version and both are being reviewed now in light of the latest situations.

Increasing Overheads

As everybody is aware the economy is going through some turbulent times. Inflation is gradually increasing and we are seeing many daily costs increasing particularly energy, raw materials and fuel. We therefore as a club are considering all of this in our future planning. We are also taking a look at alternative energy sources for the longer term

TENNIS REPORT

Overview – The Club reopened on 29 March 2021 following the last full-scale lockdown. I am glad to say that since that date, the playing of outdoor tennis has continued largely unaffected by the varying degrees of covid restrictions placed on our everyday lives. On the social front, we enjoyed al fresco drinks and pass our thanks to Sheila Jalland and her team of volunteers for running the bar in difficult circumstances. Indoor social events were not allowed for most of year but the newly formed Social Committee staged a very successful Christmas party before the return of more covid restrictions in January. The main social events held outside were the traditional bonfire night and the Graham Owen Cup held in September which attracted 26 pairs of players and attended by Graham's extended family. It was an extra special event at which a tree was planted in Graham's memory and we celebrated his life, love of tennis and incomparable contribution to the development of 1879.

Matches and Competitions – We played the full quota of summer A&D and Bucks Shield Matches albeit with much reduced post-match socialising. The Bucks Shield highlights included – The Mens 3 pair and Mixed Vets won their respective divisions and in the 2 pair competition, both the Mens 2 and 3 teams were promoted. In the A&D leagues, the Men1, Ladies 2 and Mixed 3 teams were all promoted. The Club Championships were keenly contested with Finals Day being held in its traditional slot in September. Congratulations to all the winners and finalists. The standard of tennis played in the Mens Singles final between Nick Brooks and Charlie Hill was particularly high. It is perhaps not surprising that the Mens 1st team is currently unbeaten on the winter A&D Division 1.

Coaching – Nick Brooks and his team have run a wide array of coaching sessions for both adults and juniors. For adults there is a selection of courses such as rusty rackets, intermediate fast doubles, cardio fitness, advanced fast doubles as well weekly sessions for those playing in Club teams. For Juniors, he runs, in addition to the weekly Mini Red, Orange and Green sessions (junior age groupings), a twice weekly Tennis for Teens course which is proving very popular. The Friday junior night (open only to members) regularly attracts 50 children and is proving to be a great end of week social gathering for parents. I am pleased to report that Nick has been awarded Coach of the Year by the Bucks LTA. Congratulations to Nick and to Dinah Martin who has been awarded Volunteer of the Year.

Membership – the Club has enjoyed a significant increase in its playing membership over the last 12 months which is due in no small part to the popularity of Nick’s coaching and his infectious enthusiasm. In total there are 100 new members (42 adults and 58 juniors).

	Jan-20	Jan-21	Jan-22	Inc v 21	Inc v20
Adults	147	141	183	42	36
Juniors	89	70	128	58	39
TOTAL	236	211	311	100	75

We did seem to benefit from a post-Covid demographic shift as under 35’s and young families left London and relocated to Chesham in the search for larger properties with gardens. Of the increase in 42 adult members, 18 were in the 18-35 age category. This trend is particularly encouraging for the club’s future and one that we hope we can build upon in the coming year.

Subscriptions – after many years in which the subscriptions have largely been kept unchanged and in the face of increasing costs, we are proposing some modest increases for 2022/23 to the over 35 adult subscriptions. However, in an effort to encourage increased participation from younger age groups, we are not increasing their subscriptions.

Facilities – As a short-term priority we are going to wash and re-paint courts 1,2 & 3 as the courts have been slippery in light rain in recent months. The re-painting will improve the grip as the paint will contain the requisite level of grit. The uncertainty regarding our application for the padel courts has made planning for development of the other tennis courts difficult. The Tennis Committee is currently reviewing the options including levelling off courts 5&6 with court 7 to make a run of three courts (based on Padel going ahead). Research is currently ongoing into the various surface options including artificial clay and new technology known as hybrid clay and Red clay+. We plan to hold an open forum to discuss the options in more details before making a recommendation to the Main Committee and ultimately to members.

Thank you for your continued support and I look forward another year of enjoyable tennis at 1879.

SQUASH REPORT

The squash section was hit hard by the COVID related restrictions resulting in full closure of the courts for several months followed by restrictions on type of play permissible.

Thankfully full play is back and, in the main, playing levels and membership levels have held up at pre COVID levels.

We have welcomed a good number of new members in the past year which is great. One of our new members is Phil Nightingale, part of the team at the local church, but he also happens to be the England no. 1 at the over 35 age group. We hope to arrange an event with Phil in the not too distant future which we will publicise around the club.

Perhaps the highlight though is the work Suzanne Lund has been doing to regenerate women's squash both here at 1879 and on a wider basis in Bucks. We now have 2 women's teams competing in the Bucks inter club leagues (previously zero) and the leagues themselves are managed by Suzanne at the county level. We have just started an internal women's league too.

We applied for and received grants to help build up both women's and junior squash at the club and John Hatch continues to do a great job with juniors and building school liaison programmes to attract more. Junior team squash has been slow to resume post COVID.

At the adult level, team play resumed September 2021 and in addition to the 2 x women's teams we have 1 men's team in Division 2 of the country structure (down from 2 teams pre COVID - a trend common across several clubs in the county).

We are looking to arrange internal matches between juniors, women and men in the spring.

We have reinstated 'club night' on the first Thursday of every month welcoming old and new players of all levels. This is an open invitation to all, just turn up or call Sanjay Raturi to find out more.

In terms of facilities, the squash corridor feels much better now that the old drinks machine has been removed and a new water dispenser installed. A further face lift of certain aspects is planned. Probably unbeknown to many, the external roofing was replaced at the back end of 2021 and should guarantee us another 25 dry years. Internally, the court walls were cleaned and a few areas replastered.

Finance Report

We don't need to be told that the period from March 2020 to current day has been extraordinary and our Club accounts for the period from April 2020 to March 2021, are similarly unusual.

Our income from tennis subscriptions, which surprisingly remained stable, reflect the fact that when our tennis courts were finally allowed to open, our members, both tennis and many squash members, were so keen to get outside, that all 9 courts were fully occupied for several evenings a week. Many of us therefore had some of the most enjoyable periods of social tennis ever. This possibly meant that the vast majority of our members were not only happy to pay the full subscription but did not request any associated credit in the current year.

Thank you to all those tennis **and** squash members concerned – especially to any who may not even have been able or willing to use the facilities. We were hugely grateful to know we had funds up front to cover expenses that would be incurred whilst the club remained shut and before Covid grants were created. Your support means that we remain in a position to continue to invest, as expected, under our 10-year plan.

But, whilst the tennis facilities were fully utilised, our squash courts lay dormant. Our squash subs fell to 60% of prior years and booking fees, which frequently equal subs, were very low.

During this time, we maintained the facilities as necessary, with expenses being incurred on security; measures to comply with Covid 19 regulations; the new fencing at the front of the club and those costs which are required, irrespective of club usage such as lawn mowing, gutter clearing etc. With no squash or clubhouse and bar use, our energy costs plummeted, junior squash coaching was minimal and so our overheads fell significantly.

Our normal sources of other income including social activities and hall hire were negligible. No sooner had the bar been partially restocked than we were in shut-down again and

Sheila, our Bar Manager, was trying to sell perishable stock to members to avoid any loss. Bar profit was therefore low after the bumper amount in 2020, but draft figures for the current year suggest the bar is once again thriving. Our invigorated junior night with such keen parents and a new social committee will hopefully ensure this trend continues. Many thanks to all those responsible.

Back to 2020/21 and as normal activities ceased, the club was able to claim total funding of £21k from various Covid grants that became available. Of this, £3k has been carried forward to the current year to cover those credits claimed against membership subscriptions and £7,500 carried forward to cover any further costs or reductions in revenue due to Covid. That has left us recognising £10,500 of the grant funds in the 2020/21 year.

We did not spend large sums on any capital projects – just £2,500 to cover the completion of the Summer House and also the two gazebos which have provided us with Covid safe drinking outside.

In summary, the club showed an excess of income over expenditure in the year of £8k. Cash-wise, this increases to £27k, since we do not “spend” money on depreciation. Furthermore, we have £10k in the Covid grants (above) carried forward and an increase in £15k relating to subs received in advance of the 2021/22 season. Deduct the £2,500 on assets and we end up with an increase in our cash balances of approximately £50k.

So, despite the difficult period we have had and from which we are hopefully now slowly emerging, the club is in a financially stable position. Our draft 2021/22 figures also suggest we will show a current year surplus. However, inflation and cost of living is increasing and energy costs – one of our most significant expenses – will see a substantial rise. We cannot therefore be complacent and will continue to monitor our spending carefully, so that we can commit to maintain and improve our facilities as planned.

My thanks as ever go to the committee and the huge amount of time some spend on our behalf – I know some of what they do and find it hard to believe and therefore suspect many members will be totally oblivious.

As Chair of Finance though, I will of course thank Michael Brook for auditing our accounts and then make a special mention of Dinah, whose dedication over the decades to 1879 has not only been in maintaining an accurate set of accounting records, but in helping out in every other area of the club.

Thank you Dinah.

Claire Moore

EXISTING CLUB OFFICERS/COMMITTEES

All Officers/committees are happy to stand again for the next 12 months

Main Committee

Neil Grantham	- Club Chairman
David Griffiths	- Club President
Alastair Ferguson	- Tennis Chairman
Paul Griffiths/Paul Belcher	- Shared Squash Chairman (Have replaced Roger Hill)
Jayne McCarthy	- Club Secretary
Simon Reynolds	- Facilities Manager
Claire Moore	- Chair of Finance
Gary Martin	- Marketing
Sheila Jalland	- Bar Manager
Amelia Holder	- Membership Secretary and Club Administrator
Dinah Martin	- Hon. Treasurer
Harriet Ellis	- Club Social Secretary

Tennis Committee

Alastair Ferguson	- Tennis Chairman
Michael Dukes	- Men's Captain
Sally Halley/Tamara Ferguson	- Ladies captain
Dinah Martin	- Mixed Captain
Phil Ogley	- Fixtures Secretary
Nick Brooks	- Head Coach
Simon Reynolds	- Committee member
Hilary Evans	- Committee member

Squash Committee

Paul Griffiths	- Joint Chairman
Paul Belcher	- Joint Chairman
Neil Hollister	- Committee member
Steve Ramsden	- Committee member
Matt Doody	- Committee member
Suzanne Lund	- Committee member
Michael Brook	- Hon. Auditor

CLUB ACCOUNTS

PREPARED BY CLAIRE/DINAH/AUDITOR – MICHAEL BROOK

2020/21 ACCOUNTS WILL BE POSTED SEPRATELY.

PRINTED COPIES WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE AGM

Voting in of officers

Name.....

Date.....

YES TO ALL		
	Yes	No
Neil Grantham – Club Chairman		
David Griffiths – Club President		
Alastair Ferguson – Tennis Chairman		
Paul Griffiths - Joint Squash Chairman		
Paul Belcher – Joint Squash Chairman		
Jayne McCarthy– Club Secretary		
Simon Reynolds – Facilities Manager		
Claire Moore – Chair of Finance		
Gary Martin – Marketing		
Sheila Jalland – Bar Manager		
Amelia Holder – Membership Secretary/Club Administrator		
Dinah Martin – Hon. Treasurer		
Harriet Ellis - Club Social Secretary		
Michael Dukes – Mens’ Tennis Captain		
Sally Halley – Joint Ladies Tennis Captain		
Tamara Ferguson – Joint Ladies Captain		
Dinah Martin - Mixed Tennis Captain		
Phil Ogley – Tennis Fixtures secretary		
Nick Brooks – Head Tennis coach		
Simon Reynolds – Tennis committee member		
Hilary Evans – Tennis Committee member		
Neil Hollister – Squash Committee member		
Steve Ramsden – Squash Committee member		
Matt Doody – Squash Committee member		
Suzanne Lund – Squash Committee member		

