**Chairman’s Report – AGM – 20<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

Happy Birthday WLTC! The Club was 80 years old on 20<sup>th</sup> February. I wonder what the first members would think of things now with this strange spaceship we call an airdome, artificial grass courts and floodlights. Our objective is to ensure that the Club is still here in 2099! We can only wonder what facilities will be like then.

**Redevelopment** – you will all be watching the build happening alongside us. Take a few minutes to go on the practice court and look at our new car park. Impressive. The matter still takes up an inordinate amount of Committee time as unfortunately the legal documentation and therefore protection for the Club is months behind; sometimes not even started! Deep frustration! I can best describe it as having our very own Brexit scenario!! The Club has had to pay legal fees which you’ll see in the Accounts and which we should never have incurred. We are doing our best to get this money back from Elmbridge. We hope at the end we will have a new 25 year Lease.

On a positive note, work will be starting shortly replacing our practice wall & court. We’ll keep you informed when this facility will be out of action.

And some further good news, fingers crossed. London Square have said (not fully in writing) they will buy us new airdome machinery because tests have proven that our existing machinery is too noisy for the houses in close proximity. The new machinery will be housed in a new acoustic enclosure – we’re awaiting drawings for this but have been told it will not be much bigger than existing shed. If everything goes through, we MIGHT have new machinery this summer that will be up & running for the next dome season.

We’ve been told our new address will be 2 Tennis Close, Walton-on-Thames KT12 1FN

I must thank **Nora Goodman** and **Sarah Davey** for all their time and support in trying to resolve matters with Elmbridge & London Square.

**Future Plans**

- During 2019 Carol Sheridan will gradually be taking over Membership Secretary duties from Catherine, so don’t be surprised when you start receiving emails from Carol. Thank you Catherine for all your hard work (to date).
- Work is happening to revamp our website. It will be launched later in summer.
- Court 5 – last year we successfully renewed our planning permission for a further 3 years for floodlights on this court, with an end time of 10.30pm daily. That was a bit of a battle because EBC were recommending a cut-off time of 10pm daily. Thanks to the combined support of our Ward Councillors, our request for a 10.30pm finish was upheld – it is an indication of forthcoming battles due to the development alongside us. We intend to ensure that the work is started under this planning permission and want to coincide with the repair work to Court 5 because of tree root damage. That’s another discussion point with EBC! We could not face substantial court work whilst the redevelopment was happening, especially given the access problems.
- We are looking at plans to change our floodlights on Courts 1&2 and dome lighting to LED’s. We will also consider improving the outdoor lighting on Court 3&4, again to LED. This will involve a further planning application which we want to submit before anyone moves in to new houses. We’ll let you know if we need letters of support! What we can do will involve careful consideration of our financial situation. But changing to LED’s will stop that frustrating 20 minute wait for lights to warm up and mean lower running costs.
There are many aspects to running the Club which, at first sight, have little to do with playing tennis but are necessary to ensure everyone’s safety. In May we had to get to grips with and embrace the latest Data Protection Rules (GDPR). I must thank Valerie Hendry for her detailed work on this. In October, the LTA advised they were withdrawing the TennisMark (formerly ClubMark) scheme which we had worked hard to achieve and maintain, and an indication to a prospective member/ outside viewer of the Club’s standards. The LTA now place greater emphasis on Safeguarding adults and children, an aspect your Committee has always taken very seriously. Sarah led us through this process to ensure we still qualified to be a registered LTA club. More recently, we have updated our Fire Alarm system and emergency lighting, and changed a lot of Clubhouse lights to LED’s

Thanks – as ever, we are indebted to the many members who undertake work around the Club; without their invaluable contribution we could not function as we do. There are some I would like to thank specifically – Graham Bradley (who ran our box leagues for 5 years) & Duncan Willitts (taken over Box Leagues), Chris Dean (website), Chris Tomkins & team (dome), Viv Ellison (social), David Gardner (online booking & IT), Valerie Hendry (collecting match & non-member coaching fees) Di Kay & Heather Fraser (our gardening gurus), all Team captains and all Parents who help with Juniors. In that aspect, I’d thank Sarah Davey who has assisted Duncan on Friday nights for several years. She is about to hand over to Lyana Napia but will be continuing in her role as Welfare Officer. We were all sorry when our groundsman Graham Lamb suffered his bout of ill health but when he returned, he was unable to fully undertake all the work. We are very grateful to Malcolm Henbery and Jeff Goddard who stepped in during Graham’s absence, and who continue to work to keep our grounds looking good; thank you all three. I’m sorry if I’ve not named you specifically; all help is greatly appreciated.

I must thank all members of Executive Committee for the work and time they put into the running of the Club, much of it unseen; the individual contributions are too lengthy to mention but feel I must highlight Toni Wensley for keeping our bar well stocked. She takes her quality control duties very seriously!!!

We are always on the look out for more volunteers. If you think you can help, please chat to a Committee Member. For example, do you enjoy playing in matches? Teams don’t run themselves and we always need people to organise matches. This is an important part of Club life so that we can offer members, both young & old, the complete spectrum of social to competitive play with some coaching in between to help us improve. Thank you Duncan, Rob & Petr for your efforts and good humour whilst trying to improve that forehand/ volley/ whatever.

So here’s to the next 80 years! I doubt that any of our current members, apart perhaps from the very young, will be around then. But hey the centenary is only 20 years away and I’m sure that some of you will still be gracing the courts in 2039!!

Hoping to see as many of you as possible at the AGM.

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Chairman
17th February 2019