**Newton Abbot Squash, Racquets and Lawn Tennis Club**

**Annual General Meeting, January 22, 2025**

**Chair Report**

In my third year as Chair I wanted to make sure we continued our focus on the four key areas from previous years:

1. Keep the house in order by maintaining excellence in Safeguarding, Financial, Membership management and record keeping practices
2. Raise the profile of the club to encourage new members to join and ensure the sustainability of the club
3. Continue to look for efficiencies to keep our costs under control and increase our financial security
4. Maintain the best possible club experience for current members

Keeping the house in order, Andy, Denise, Malcolm and Pauline have all done an excellent job throughout the year through their hard work and dedication to the club. I am very grateful for their support as their efforts are so important to the ongoing smooth running of the club and to ensure we follow good process. One area that needed a fresh look was Health and Safety, so we have now updated our policy and completed a Risk Assessment for Squash & Racketball which we shall communicate to all club members very shortly. Safeguarding remains the biggest challenge where we require volunteers who help out with the junior club / coaching sessions to complete a DBS check and safeguarding training.

Raising the profile of the club is an area where we can always do more, and our membership can have a huge impact here by acting as ambassadors of the club encouraging new members to join. Increasing our presence on social media would also be great if we can find a volunteer who has the interest and of course the time to dedicate to this activity. Our website and ‘club nights’ continue to generate a lot of interest in the club, and despite the on-going significant turnover, our overall membership numbers have remained very steady over the past 12 months and remain ~50% up since the pandemic. We have also hosted a number of Devon Squash Graded and Junior Squash events which always generate very positive feedback and helps the spread the word about our club.

Financially, we continue to make very good progress and for the first time since the pandemic, we have made a surplus! Excluding £8K in grants from the REC Trust, the surplus was ~£3K versus a £4.5K loss the previous year. This excellent result reflects several factors including higher membership throughout the year with increased subscription fees, the REC Trust holding the club contribution at the 2023 level (saving ~£2k) and lower utilities costs. Our utility costs continue to fall through lower contracted rates and maximising the use of the ‘Hives’ to control the heating on the squash courts. Also, our Broadband costs have been eliminated by switching to the upgraded broadband recently installed by the Trust. We’ve also broadened our membership portfolio to include Corporate membership.

Maintaining the best possible club experience for current members is absolutely key and I feel we continue to make good progress in this area too.

* Facilities-wise, we have completed the repainting of all four Tennis courts and the refurbishment of a Squash court which has allowed us to salvage a stock of flooring to effect repairs to the other courts. The Tennis pavilion also looks great following the redecoration and refurnishing, thanks to all the super efforts of the Tennis Leadership Team.
* Maddie agreed a new Tennis coaching contract with the club and we also have Mike Harris offering Squash and Racketball coaching.
* Dan Gough and Sharon Brown entered 10 Squash / Racketball teams in the Devon leagues again this year which included a 2nd Ladies Squash team.
* Steve O’ Donnell did us proud again with the ever popular Squash / Racketball Summerteams competition and Xmas social. The Xmas fancy dress is getting all the more creative!!
* The Squash club nights and Racketball mornings remain very popular with typically 15- 20 participants on a Monday night.
* The Squash / Racketball box ladders are now well established thanks to Sharon Brown, Dan Wignall and Paul Lennox.
* Squash / Racketball club competitions will now be run as week-end events after Sam Phililips tested this format with the very successful Racketball competition this year.
* The regular Tennis morning social groups and club sessions with the support of Jane Comyns continue to be very popular.
* The club is well represented in the Tennis league with 7 teams and all have had a very successful season, reaching new highs for the club.
* Maddie ran a very successful Tennis summer championships and the weekly additional needs group Tennis session is still going strong and proving very popular.

Another highlight of the year was securing a £30K grant from Viridor which will allow us to refurbish the squash court building roof, starting at the end of January. Many thanks to Andy for leading the grant application.

Looking at the club as a whole, the Tennis Leadership Team has grown stronger over the last year and is taking more responsibility and ownership for the running of the Tennis club. They would now like to run their own affairs independently of Squash & Racketball, taking full financial responsibility for the running of the Tennis section. A proposal for reorganising the club is on the agenda of this AGM so that the members attending can discuss the proposed change and vote on the proposal.

Finally, I would like to close by thanking all the committee members for their excellent support to the club and me personally again over the past 12 months. Although we are a small group, I feel we’ve got a lot done and are making good progress to ensure the sustainability of the club. I think the proposed reorganisation is another important step in the right direction. I would also like to thank all the volunteers not formally part of the committee who make a huge contribution to the enjoyment of being part of this great club. Thank you. We couldn’t do it without you!

Tim Villis 22 January, 2025