Chair's Report to the Annual General Meeting: November 2026

Welcome, and thank you for attending our AGM. This is an opportunity to reflect on the past year, recognise those who give their time to the club and look ahead to what we want to achieve together. Whether you play league matches, join social sessions or simply enjoy a game with friends, you are an important part of our club.

A club run by volunteers

I would like to begin by reminding everyone that our club is run by a volunteer committee. Committee members give their time alongside work, family and other commitments, taking care of the many tasks that keep the club operating. Much of this happens behind the scenes, but it is essential to the tennis and facilities we all enjoy. The club belongs to its members, and its future depends on our willingness to share that responsibility.

Thank you to the committee

On behalf of the members, I would like to thank everyone who has served on the committee over the past year. I would like to recognise our former Chair, Brian Mackness for the time and commitment given to the club and the responsibility carried in that role. My thanks also go to our Membership Secretary, Pauline Allsop (who is also interim Club Secretary) and Treasurer, Doug Chalmers for the time they have devoted to managing membership and looking after the club's finances. These are significant commitments, and I am grateful to them, and to every committee member, for volunteering their time on our behalf.

Position on Financial challenges

We have both immediate and long-term financial challenges. Day-to-day we struggle to generate sufficient income to meet our overheads (further details in the Treasurers Report). The committee has also been working to secure capital funding for court resurfacing and to achieve a sustainable future funding position. To seek solutions to both issues we have explored various options, including meeting with the Recreational Trust to seek to renegotiate terms, although those discussions were unsuccessful, an extensive search for grant funding, which was also unsuccessful and finally work is continuing on financial modelling and the development of a business case to explore converting Court 4 into a padel facility. This remains a proposal under consideration, rather than an agreed project, as we assess its viability and how it could contribute to funding the resurfacing of our tennis courts and generating a sustainable income stream.

Membership

Our membership currently stands at 123, compared with 107 last year (further details in the Membership Secretary's report). Thank you to everyone who has renewed their membership, and a warm welcome to those who have joined us during the year. Retaining existing members and attracting new players are both important to the club's future. Looking ahead, I would like us to continue making the club a welcoming and encouraging for place for members to take part in tennis that suits at whatever level.

League tennis

Following unprecedented success in 2025, this summer's campaign saw us fall back to earth with a bump. Player's unavailability or moving to other clubs and injuries played a part, alongside each team playing up level. However, congratulations to the Men's A for achieving a 4th place finish in Division 2, to our Ladies C team for a 3rd place finish in Division 5, which might be enough for a back-to-back promotion and finally our summer mixed team on securing promotion to Division 4. Sadly, our remaining teams were either withdrawn or relegated.

Thank you to everyone who has represented the club, and to the captains and organisers who have coordinated fixtures and teams. League tennis gives members the opportunity to compete, develop their game and represent the club. Whatever the results, I hope we can continue to encourage participation and team spirit in the year ahead.

Social tennis

Social tennis is an equally important part of club life: a chance to enjoy the game, meet other members and play without the pressure of league competition. Our Thursday evening and Saturday afternoon sessions, alongside week-day mornings, continue to grow in popularity. Thank you to everyone who has helped organise or support these activities. It is so important that we keep encouraging a friendly atmosphere where members feel able to join in, including those who are new to the club. So, an additional thanks to those members who greet new people an informally induct into the club.

Coaching

Coaching is an important part of club life, supporting junior and adult players of all abilities, from complete beginners to experienced league competitors. For juniors, it helps build sound technique, confidence and sportsmanship while making tennis enjoyable and encouraging a lasting interest in the game. For adults, coaching offers opportunities to learn the basics, return to tennis or refine skills and match tactics. All of which is important for recruiting and retaining members.

Our coach Mads has offered all of this and more over the year. One great example of added value is the weekly coaching offered to young adults with learning difficulties delivered in partnership with Safe Breaks and funded by Strategic Solutions Financial Planners, thank to them and thank you to Mads for all of the above.

Please consider volunteering

My main appeal this evening is for more members to step forward for committee roles. We cannot rely indefinitely on the same small group to do everything. Bringing in new volunteers helps share the workload, introduces fresh ideas and gives the club a stronger foundation for the future. All are welcome and a willingness to help and work with others is all that is required. As you know, we have several recently vacated roles that need to be filled.

If you are interested, please put yourself forward later in the meeting. If a committee role is not possible for you at present, please consider offering help with a particular task or event. Every contribution helps, and sharing the work makes it more manageable for everyone.

Finally, thank you to all our members for being part of the club. My hope for the coming year is that we can build on what works well, address the challenges together and keep the club a welcoming place to play tennis. With more members involved in running it, we can look forward to the next year with confidence.