**Chairman’s Report May 2020-2021**

The last year 2020/21 has been severely affected by the Covid 19 pandemic; firstly, and most importantly, our thoughts and best wishes go out to those members and their families that have been affected by Covid thus far and we hope you all remain well and safe from this horrible illness going forward.

The impact on the club led to a year of interruption and change resulting in all sections losing valuable playing time. The rules and guidelines changed throughout the year, and I thank you all for your patience and, most importantly, your flexibility in accepting and adhering to the changes made to the operating processes within the club throughout this period.

The Committee’s primary focus has been on the safety of our members and staff, whilst making sure that we stay financially stable throughout what has been a very unpredictable time. The financial stability of the club was helped massively during this period by the loyalty demonstrated by our members, continuing to pay memberships and itching to return as soon as each section was allowed. Finding our way through Government, Council and Sporting bodies’ respective interpretations of rules and guidelines has been at times difficult but through the support of each sections’ committees we were ready to go at every opportunity in every sport where and when we were allowed.

We opened a temporary tennis membership during the summer of 2020 which was positively received with numerous members of other sections joining and taking advantage of getting back to sport; this led to several lasting friendships and good sporting competition between sections who rarely mixed previously. We relaunched this initiative again following the second lockdown during the early part of 2021 with similar success.

Despite these pressures, the positive approaches to promoting the club being made by all sections in their respective committees is reaping rewards with good progress in all sports. Our sections continue to thrive with the juniors in Cricket, Hockey and Tennis all very strong; the lack of availability of the Squash courts due to the pandemic has not helped getting more juniors into squash and racquetball. Keeping these age groups interested is a key factor in retaining them and in ensuring a bright future.

The coaching programmes across the sections are continually improving and the utilisation of social media is keeping everyone informed and engaged. A big thank you to all our coaches across Cricket, Hockey, Tennis and Squash/Racquetball for their efforts and in particular the army of volunteers that help them manage the junior teams and sessions.

We organised several events during the year which, due to the pandemic, had to be moved foward into 2021. I would like to thank all the volunteers who stepped forward to organise these events. Booking, cancelling, rebooking, etc has not been an easy process and saving monies and deposits where possible has proved testing but most of our suppliers stood by us and we have managed to get most events in this summer. Social events make a huge difference to the dynamics of the club by both bringing people together and generating much needed income.

**Club Employees**

Our club could not operate without our small group of permanent staff and our great bar team. I would like to offer my sincere thanks to all of them:

* Our Administration Manager Teresa Weedon
* Our bar team led by Jill Marshall who continue to provide a high quality, professional service, stepping up when required and representing the club in the best way possible to visiting teams and their supporters and coping with all the changes we have had to make throughout the year.
* Our grounds team of Dave Gadsden, Jamie O’Sullivan and Ray Watkins have done an exceptional job keeping the pitches, the astroturf, tennis courts and the surroundings immaculate throughout the year. Visiting teams including the professionals have been very complimentary about our ground and facilities, which is testament to the job carried out by Dave, Jamie and Ray.
* Karen has again provided BBQs throughout the year and kept all our sections’ teams fed, when allowed, during their respective league seasons.

**Finances**

We formed a subcommittee during the pandemic to focus on our financial viability and successfully got funding from Government and other sources where we could. We reduced our running costs to a bare minimum putting all but two of our staff on the Government Job Retention scheme. We have tracked down every avenue of funding available to us which has meant that we have remained financially stable and now have the necessary funds to continue with the plans to develop sports and access facilities at the club.

**Club Development**

The creation of the outside patio/bar area was a huge success and provided welcome income when needed; members were able to enjoy a level of normality with lighting and heating. It has created a focal point, helped us attract new members and provided a much more pleasant experience for everyone.

**Future Development**

Despite the impact of the pandemic we continue to work on planning future developments at the club. These can be divided into two distinct categories:

1. **Club restructuring**- We have done a lot of work in the background this year on restructuring the club. This has become necessary as firstly our trust holders Barclays have changed their business model and no longer provide this service. Secondly, HMRC have changed the rules regarding how Community Amateur Sports Clubs record their accounts splitting members’ and non-members’ income.

We formed a subcommittee to address this issue and they have investigated what the optimum operating model for the club should be considering the changes above and what benefits any prospective future model brings. We are working through the options now and will issue further briefings during the coming year leading to an EGM where we will present the proposed changes and the recommendation for approval.

1. **Developing the club infrastructure and sporting facilities-**
2. Padel Tennis- We have, after a prolonged exchange, finally got a draft contract we believe we can agree to, which will allow the development of the two planned padel courts on the area currently occupied by court 9. Closely linked to this is the redevelopment of tennis courts 10 and 11. Planning for padel was rejected on the first application, due primarily to neighbours objecting to the roof; a secondary application has now been presented with the roof having been omitted.

Whilst there are obvious economies in getting both these works done at the same time, due to the delays in planning and the need to get courts 10 and 11 in play for the winter we have pushed ahead with that work with the contractor DOE and we are expecting a date for works to begin very shortly.

1. Lift Access and disabled facilities- We have assessed several options for a lift to be installed at the club and have settled on a lift that will be bolted onto the outside of the building at the side of the emergency access area. Surveys have been carried out and, as we will require planning permission, we are now engaging with the appropriate authorities; we do not expect any issues to arise and will provide a completion date as soon as we have one.

We have also investigated and are getting quotes for a disabled changing area and toilet facility in the tennis hut which will allow us to start to offer sports to less able athletes, initially tennis.

**Going Forward**

The focus of the Committee during this next financial year will be to navigate our way through whatever constraints the pandemic creates and continue to deliver a great sporting facility. We will continue developing a longer-term plan for creating the revenues required to enhance our club house, the outside areas and the expansion of sports on offer. We will also continue to improve our communications; work has been done in this area on social media and on our website; the primary issue we are tackling is in encouraging people to use the options available.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow Committee members for their selfless commitment and hard work in what at times can be a thankless task. If you would like to get involved in shaping the future of such a great club, nominations forms will be available on the notice boards and website during the AGM period.