

# Ivybridge Tennis Club – Chairman's Report

23rd June 2017

Dear Members

## Introduction

In my last report I described 2015/16 as an eventful year; 2016/17 has been even more eventful and very busy. At the last AGM, we discussed the strategy and future management of the club and the Committee has invested a considerable amount of their time and effort to confirming the way forward. I am pleased to report, we have started the journey to run the Club on a sustainable basis.

## A Sustainable Club

We are all aware that for several years, the clubs finances have not been good enough to run the club on a long term basis. Whilst we have been able to cover our running costs and make our LTA loan repayments, we have been unable to put any significant funds aside to replace the carpet or carry out major building maintenance when required. It was also clear that the club needed a manager as running the club on a ad-hoc basis and developing the necessary profitability was just not tenable. Accordingly proposals had been developed based on TennisMad providing management services funded in the short term by the LTA. Shortly after the AGM, this proposal fell away as the partners in TennisMad decided they wished to take their business in different directions. Whilst this was initially a set-back, it provided an exciting new opportunity for the club. This developed into the new strategy which has now been implemented and which gives us real prospects of transforming the club to become sustainable. The main planks of this strategy are:

1. TennisMad's contract was terminated by agreement at the end of March 2017 and all coaching and related activities have been brought in house. Paul is now employed as Director of Tennis and Gail and Rachel have joined the staff. We welcome them most warmly.
2. The LTA have agreed to provide significant funding over a three year period in partial support of a Club Manager and for this we are most grateful. The LTA also worked closely with us in defining the role and the recruitment and appointment process. We are pleased to report that we had very strong interest in the position and are delighted that Sue Turner accepted our offer and started on 1st April. She is also welcomed most warmly.

Both teams have made a great start in reviewing the clubs operations and they are developing detailed plans to take the club forward. Some significant changes have been made and more will follow during the year. Change can sometimes be unsettling but we want to re-assure all members that our club model is not changing. Ivybridge Tennis Club is the heart of the South Devon Tennis Centre and is planned to remain so. The initiatives we implement will be designed to attract more people to use the Centre with the aim of encouraging new users to become members in due course. The Treasurer's report will also provide some detail about why this approach is essential and will outline the financial plans which underpin our strategy.

Sue is away on holiday so has sent her apologies but I will ask Paul to say a few words about some of the tennis initiatives in the pipeline during the meeting.

We strongly welcome comments and feedback from members this evening and throughout the year. Paul, Sue and anyone on the committee will be very pleased to hear your thoughts at any time.

## 2016 AGM/EGM Discussion

I would like to take this opportunity to report back on some points raised at last year's AGM and EGM:

1. Timing of AGM and subscriptions. The committee has reviewed the current model with an EGM in the autumn, subscriptions payable from 1st January, and an AGM as soon as the Accounts are available in the late spring. The conclusion is that there are significant advantages with this arrangement and it will continue for the time being.
2. There has been an increase in the renting out of court space for schools to use at non peak times although there is scope to do more.
3. Simplified membership structure as suggested at the last AGM and ratified at the EGM
4. In view of the strategy adopted, there are no current discussions with potential outside providers as mentioned last year.
5. Following receipt of a detailed proposal, the committee decided not to proceed with a change to LED lighting on the internal courts as the payback period was too long. Accordingly the existing lights have been cleaned and re-lamped providing a significant improvement in the lighting. A substantial contribution has been made towards this work by a good friend of the club and this is much appreciated. Thanks are also due to Steve Hitch for arranging and managing this work.
6. At both meetings, the question of the reservation of the 6 to 7pm indoor courts for coaching was raised. This will be kept under review as plans are developed but as you will see from the Treasurer's Report, the coaching income is fundamental to the sustainability of the club

## 50th Anniversary Celebrations

This is a historic year for the club with the celebration of our 50th Birthday. Two events are planned and initial details will be shared later in the meeting. We hope that members will join the celebrations and support both events.

## Club Teams

The club is running 11 teams in the P&D and the South Devon Leagues. It is proving to be a pretty successful season. The P&D Ladies A, the South Devon Mens and the South Devon Mixed A teams are all currently undefeated so congratulations to them. They and some other teams have good prospects of winning their respective leagues. I would like to thank all the captains whose hard work enables so many members to play in these matches.

We are aware that far more needs to be done next year to make team tennis available to a wider number of members and initiatives will be developed for this very early in the new year. We have started collating the results of all the team matches and they are being posted on the notice board in the corridor to keep everyone informed.

## Club Sessions

There has been a request to discuss club sessions, particularly the Friday evening and Saturday afternoon ones. We suggest this is picked up during the discussion on this report.

## Committee and Project Assistance

This club requires a strong and dedicated committee to function effectively at any time but particularly now as we make the journey to sustainability. I would like to thank all members of the committee

together with the President, Steve Hitch, and the Company Secretary, Alan Strowger, for all their hard work and their tremendous support. I would also like to thank Di Kellett for volunteering to take on the role of Welfare officer and Andy Copestick the role of Health and Safety Director.

However it is really important to continue to refresh the committee with new members bringing new ideas thus also allowing some of those who have contributed in the past to relinquish their positions. We would be most grateful for some volunteers to put themselves forward and join us. In particular we need a Secretary, a position required by our Articles and Rules. The main duty is to compile the minutes of the various meetings and we would be most grateful if anyone has the time to take on this role. Julie Hulett has been our Minutes Secretary for quite some time but has requested to relinquish her role. I would like to thank her for her contribution to the smooth running of the club and the committee.

From time to time we would benefit from specialist assistance on general matters or individual projects. We would welcome assistance from any member with relevant specialist knowledge. The Treasurer's report mentions a couple of examples but others include:

1. The project to provide a new Electronic Point of Sale system. The market needs to be reviewed and the most appropriate one identified.
2. Many sports clubs supply articles to local papers about club performance, internal and external competitions. If anyone could help with compiling and submitting suitable copy, that would be wonderful.

## Staff and Volunteers

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to everyone who has contributed to the smooth running of the club over the last year. This particularly includes all the staff and the many volunteers who make a massive contribution. A couple of our employees are moving on to develop their careers and I would like to thank them for their efforts. A warm welcome is also extended to the new staff who have recently started.

Thank you all very much.

## Conclusion

It is an exciting year for the Club with our 50th Birthday and a new phase in the Club's development. Thank you for your support and I hope you continue to enjoy your tennis at this great club.

Dominic Hall  
Chairman