

sidelines

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM VICARS MOOR LTC

AUTUMN 2011

Update from our Chairman

DUE to my long-standing involvement with Vicars Moor, I am very much enjoying my role as Chairman along with its challenges! There has been a lot of activity in many areas over the past 12 months and I would just like to take this opportunity to summarize my views on a few of them:

MEMBERSHIP

Our New Members' Open Weekend, held in April was key point in our calendar. It was superbly attended and I was delighted to see so many of our members supporting this event by inviting friends and family to visit our club.

It is no secret that we started the new year from April with membership numbers around 10% down on the prior year. Thankfully, since the Open Weekend, our membership numbers have steadily increased back up to around 20% higher than this low point and well above last year's numbers. The Improver and Junior sections have grown particularly strong which is fantastic news for the future of the club.

The mix of our membership base has changed with growth in all sections of the club with the exception of our Cat A members. However, whilst the key emphasis is on retaining the loyal, long term members of our club, it is also vitally important to keep bringing younger players into the fold. This will help drive the club forwards for many years to come. I'm looking ahead to the next 10 years and I'm certain this approach will help to naturally grow our valued Cat A membership.

We are delighted to welcome all our new members to Vicars Moor and hopefully you will continue to enjoy the club for many years to come. Please do try and say hello to faces you do not know around the club.

COACHING

A special thank you must go to our new coaches and their innovative coaching programmes. Paul Rock and his team have bought a huge amount of energy and enthusiasm to the club and introduced a variety of tennis programmes to suit a wide audience. The tennis courts are busy with a mix of young juniors, the regular social tennis, team tennis players and our veteran players. It is this mix which makes Vicars Moor a unique place for everyone.

The club is now very much a talking point amongst the local schools due to the success of our Junior nights and holiday camp programmes. This all contributes to ensuring Vicars Moor is on

the map for the local community to enjoy.

COMMUNICATION

We are continuing to improve the communication to our members and prospective members so everyone knows what is happening. We have a new website which was launched earlier this year and our regular emails will ensure you don't miss out on crucial events. Thanks to our proactive social committee - we have seen a large number of very popular social events, and regularly busy nights on the bar.

THE FUTURE

We are keen to keep moving the club forwards and we have decided to try to take Vicars Moor towards Clubmark status. This award is in recognition of best practice for a Sports Club and helps us to ensure we have best policies and procedures in place for a club of our size. This will open up our funding and membership opportunities. It is also already increasing our communication and links with Enfield Council, the Middlesex Club Development team and the LTA. This will of course, in turn help us over the next 10 years as we work towards extending our lease.

Just a final word to thank our various committees for all their activity over the past 12 months. In particular I would like to thank Brian Foyle for all his efforts over the years. Brian has either undertaken or overseen a huge amount of premises work as the club during his long service as Maintenance secretary. Very few clubs of our size are able to boast 6 courts in tip top condition and all floodlit, and a clubhouse that is well maintained and stands up to the heavy usage it gets! It is always nice when new people come down to the club and are impressed with our overall set up and facilities.

In addition I would also like to thank David Goldfarb and Liz Allman for all their efforts on the tennis committee over the years. They will be stepping back this year from their Club Captain roles but we hugely appreciate everything they have done for the club.

Please approach me or any Committee Member if you feel you can volunteer just a little

to help with the different areas in running our club. We are very grateful to those of you who have come forward already in this regard.

Our club is dependent on members volunteering and we welcome any individuals who would like to share the tasks.

With your help it's onwards and upwards for Vicars Moor, a place people love to play tennis and socialise!

Matthew Robinson

86th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the 86th Annual General Meeting of Vicars Moor Lawn Tennis Club will be held in the Clubhouse on Friday, 25th November, 2011 at 8.00pm.

AGENDA

1. To accept due Notice of the meeting.
2. Matters arising from the Minutes of the 85th Annual General Meeting (a copy of the Minutes will be displayed on the notice board in the Clubhouse prior to the meeting).
3. Chairman's Report.
4. Secretary's Report including Apologies for Absence and any changes to the Club Rules.
5. Treasurer's Report including approval of the accounts for the past financial year.
6. Tennis Sub-Committee Report.
7. Bar Sub-Committee Report.
8. Social Sub-Committee Report.
9. Premises Sub-Committee Report.
10. Proposed Rule Changes.
11. Election of Club Officers and Sub-Committee Members. (A nomination sheet will be displayed in the Clubhouse).
12. To appoint two members as Honorary Auditors.
13. To fix the membership subscriptions as defined by Rule 15 and the Visitors' Fee for the forthcoming subscription year.
14. Any other business approved by the Chairman.

PLEASE NOTE:

In order to save the significant postage, paper and administrative expense we will not be sending the officers' reports, any proposed Rule changes and other relevant papers by general mail shot before the AGM. Instead copies will be displayed on the Notice Board at the Clubhouse and (if possible) will also appear on the Club's website www.vicarsmoorltc.co.uk for information and downloading. Some extra hard copies will be available at the AGM itself.

EDITORIAL

TENNIS BALLS

The accounts for the current year record a profit of £8.45 for the Club's usage of tennis balls against a profit of £5 for last year. In case you wonder how we make a profit on tennis ball usage, or for that matter bother to show such a small amount in the accounts, you may be interested to know how the Club goes about the business of its use of tennis balls. Behind the small profit larger sums are involved.

Most of you probably are by now aware the Club's ball of choice is the Wilson Tour, a high quality ball used in the Davis Cup. This ball, in the opinion of many independent retailers, responds better to the playing surface we have laid on our courts than tennis balls of comparable quality but of slightly different construction. This Wilson ball achieves a more consistent bounce and has greater durability, particularly in damp or wet playing conditions, when played on artificial grass. For some players, however, the top Slazenger ball has more feel but unfortunately the pile quickly fluffs when exposed to the rain and is not as long lasting as the Wilson Tour. The Club has on occasion introduced other makes of ball but these have not found favour with the members and for this reason the Club now keeps to the Wilson Tour. By purchasing the Wilson Tour in bulk the Club achieves a considerable saving in cost and this is passed on, either through the Club selling to members at cost price or by factoring into the match fee the modest ball cost. Currently we are purchasing Wilson Tour balls at a price a penny or so under £4 for a can of four, inclusive of VAT. Few retailers have the Wilson Tour available on discount - possibly because the major retailers favour the balls produced by their own subsidiary manufacturers. The retailer we currently favour for the purchase of balls also awards a £5 voucher on each bulk purchase and we use this on the next purchase.

For the year ending 30th September the Club spent £1,492.90 on balls and used a further £148 worth out of its current stock. The Club received from members £717.35 from the sale of new balls at £4 a can or £1 for good used balls. The good used balls are those recovered from matches which are still playable for a reasonable period - a reasonable playing period is counted in sets, not months of use!

From the information available matches and tournaments accounted for the following:

Junior championships	9 cans	£36
Club Championships	60	£240
Open Weekend	23	£92
Winter league	22	£176
Aegon league	10	£40
Middlesex league	29	£348
Total	153	£932

In the year the Club purchased 396 cans of which 370 are accounted for. We lose track of a couple of cans a month which is not bad going. If you took into account the monies received from the sale of used match balls the profit the Club

receives given the number of cans purchased should probably be higher than given in the accounts but we are at least in profit.

Alan Cameron Willett

This summer the Club lost one of its longest serving and most popular members when Alan sadly died. Alan is missed by all the members of Vicars Moor Lawn Tennis Club and I can say ALL because Alan knew and liked everyone and everyone knew and had a huge affection for Alan. Alan was an ever present member of the Club for as long as most of us can remember, a talented tennis and rugby player in his youth; in his later years he was a stalwart of the Club's social tennis sessions particularly on a Sunday morning where his tennis ability still shone through, no more so than when he received the ball on his favoured back hand. Alan's affection for the Club and the sport of tennis extended to supporting the Club in all areas particularly the Club's teams where in recent years, whatever the weather, home and away, more often than not with Jackie, he would be found cheering them on. It will be hard to envisage a match (or a glance at the whisky optic in the bar) without his presence being felt.

Such was Alan's close association and affection for Vicars Moor, it was a surprise to some to learn that when he and his young family lived for a time in Cuffley he had not only been a member but the Club Captain at Cuffley Lawn Tennis Club but not to learn that they also hold him in equally high regard.

But Alan and Jackie's association started at Vicars Moor, where Jackie was already a member when Alan arrived and had been since her junior days. We learned from Duncan Willett's lovely tribute to his father that Alan joined the Club fairly soon after he arrived in London from Scotland where, following National Service with the RAF in Germany, employment had taken him from his former home in the wee village called Lenzie, just outside Glasgow. Life at Vicars Moor clearly suited Alan and he must have suited Vicars Moor because he and Jackie were both Club Captains in 1963, the year they were married at Fox Lane Congregational Church.

Although Alan lived the greater part of his life in England we all knew he was a proud Scotsman at heart albeit a modest one and one we all miss.

Edward Bell

The Club are saddened to learn of the recent death of its Past President, Edward Bell, who was an active Club member for many years and the Club's President in the 1960's.

FOR THAT SPECIAL CELEBRATION

The Clubhouse can now be hired by members for their celebrations at a cost of £50.00. Conditions apply and they are displayed on the notice board in the bar. If you would like more details please speak to any member of the committee.

PREMISES REPORT

We reported last year that we had had a quiet year in respect of capital projects and it is the same this year with a major in depth renovation of the court surfaces and a major servicing of the floodlights. With the former the sand infill was heavily disturbed, cleaned and evenly re-laid whilst the latter was primarily a good clean out of the lamp heads, enhancing their brightness.

We had a very well attended Maintenance Day and I have to thank a number of members who really put their backs into it and repainted the clubhouse. I hope you like the colour. We weeded the courts and cleared undergrowth.

We have fitted a new vehicular gate into the grounds and at the request of many this is an open steel gate which enables members to see into the grounds. We are awaiting a quotation for some new signs and two will be fitted into these gates.

I would like to thank Sue and David Kent for their help. They just get down and do things without my asking; Geoff Dyer, Keith our groundsman and Liz who continues to keep the Clubhouse clean and tidy.

I was Chairman of the Development Committee in the mid nineties for four or five years, basically set up to investigate alternative sites if we were unable to re-negotiate an extension to our Lease here. During this time the Committee also took on the complete refitting of the bar and the kitchen and the construction of the viewing Conservatory.

I have now been Chairman of the Premises Committee for about twelve years, during which time all the courts have been totally refurbished, new surfaces laid, some twice, and surround netting renewed.

We have laid a mini-tennis court and substantially enlarged the practice wall.

We have re-roofed the clubhouse, eliminating the leaks we used to regularly experience, and refurbished the toilets.

I think the premises are as good as they have ever been and are much admired by visiting teams.

It is on that note that I give notice that I will not seek re-election. I will of course support my successor as much as I can.

Congratulations to the Winners of the Club Championships

Mens Singles – Paul Rock

Ladies Singles – Sam Engel

Mens Doubles – Paul Rock and Rafa Pacharoni

Ladies Doubles – Sam Engel and Liz Allman

Mixed Doubles – Ian Broadway and Sam Engel