

Chairman's address November 2020

What a difference a year makes! This time last year at our AGM we were very much in celebration mode. We had had a wonderful summer season of competitive tennis with lots of on court success. We had received planning permission for our new floodlight scheme and our membership was steadily growing and we continued to have a secure financial base. It felt like a golden period for the club.

We couldn't have imagined that just a year later we would be in the middle of a worldwide pandemic and all that that has brought to our lives. We talk of social distancing, lockdown, face masks and thorough hand washing and the new normal as everyday words and expressions. So many people have had a very tough few months with more to come, so I don't want to gloss over the impact that Covid-19 has brought and continues to bring. But I am proud of how the club and its members have behaved and adapted.

So what about the last 7 months? There has been a period of 3 months with no tennis, then the 5 mile rule, only singles, then doubles with restrictions, etc. Even Wimbledon was cancelled! But we can now play and that has brought benefits to our members in so many ways. It has shown the club is so much more than just a tennis facility. It is a community and one which has worked well in these difficult times. For example Lisa Harrison, our club secretary, set up the "joy of isolation" WhatsApp group and phoned lots of members to check they were ok and coping with their isolation during lockdown. Lots of other members also checked in on tennis friends and playing partners during this strangest of times. On behalf of the committee I would like to thank the whole membership for the support given to our tennis community here at CLTC.

This time last year I had not even heard of Zoom, other than a lollipop from my childhood, let alone holding our AGM on Zoom. So thank you to all of you that have opted in to this unique arrangement.

Although many things have been so different some things have been the same. The committee has continued to meet, via Zoom in recent months, and navigate the club through the changes that have had to be made. During the year Paul Cousins has agreed to take the lead responsibility for Health and Safety matters, even more important than usual at this time. Rob Upton, as treasurer, has as always kept a firm grip on our finances and although we know there will be challenges ahead, we will always budget carefully and live within our means and respond to the uncertainty ahead.

This financial prudence has lead to the postponement of our floodlight project. The committee felt that on balance it was an unnecessary risk at this time. Nevertheless Meurig Evans, who lead the project has maintained a great relationship with the contractor and we can still deliver the project

when times are more predictable. Our planning permission is valid for 5 years, so there is no need for undue concern at this stage. Meurig is not staying on the committee after many years working hard for the club in many ways. Meurig played a key role some 10 years ago in helping the club come through a very turbulent time. You have played a major part over the years in several initiatives such as the twinning with the Don Bosco club in Nantes, the several court upgrades, personally testing any new beers you have suggested for the bar and ensuring we have the stability, facilities and skills in place to be the best club in Wales. Thank you.

I am delighted to see that Cat Wray has been nominated to take Meurig's place on the committee. Cat, is a long standing member of the club and is a determined and capable competitor on the court. I am sure she will bring lots of tennis experience and as a practicing GP some much needed medical knowledge to the committee.

Another change is our President Mike Foster is standing down and Hywel James is taking over. Both are well known within the club and thank you to Mike for his ongoing support and welcome to Hywel.

We continue to have a very active tennis playing committee who have a wide range of both tennis and professional skills to call upon and I am confident that your club is in very safe hands at this turbulent moment in the grip of the pandemic. Some things will have to change and respond to the external environment but you can rest assured that tennis will remain at the heart of the decisions that have to be made and the club will remain the place to play tennis in South Wales.

The short term future for the club is unpredictable and we will need to remain flexible in how respond to the external world, but we will always put maximising the opportunity to play tennis at the heart of our decisions. A few examples of this are the additional doubles leagues John has set up for the winter and our participation in the South Wales reciprocal membership scheme. This initiative allows members who live outside of Cardiff County to play tennis at other participating clubs in their local area free of charge.

Finally and importantly one other person has remained a constant throughout the past few months. It is of course our Head Coach and General Manager John Williams. He has worked tirelessly in his role to keep the club up to date with the ever changing regulations and has had to acquire a few new skills along the way and cope with lots of new and different challenges. Thank you for leading us through these unprecedented times John and a special thank you for the support you give to so many members, it is appreciated. Thank you also for being so willing to react to whatever is thrown at you. I'm sure you will have a few more to cope with over the next few months. Be assured though you won't be on your own.