

SSLTC Newsletter

Spring Issue, 2021

www.ssltc.co.uk



@StonyTennisClub



Headlines in this edition!

- Great to be back! 🙌
- Plans for reopening
- SSLTC dodge the Floods
- Our Financial Health
- See how we are "Giving-Back" lost Lockdown days
- Our coaching moves into celebrity status with the launch of Tennis Unlocked on National TV

Chairman's Welcome

Welcome to the 2021 Spring Newsletter. It's almost time. Hurrah! Let's get out there! A newsletter that perhaps lands at a time of heightened anticipation as we wait for our club to reopen after our third lockdown. I hope that this finds you well and keen to improve your physical and mental wellbeing by returning to tennis at the club.

I'm pleased to say that we still have a club for you to return to after so long an absence, despite seemingly having everything thrown at us this year. Not just all the uncertainty and problems associated with the lockdowns, but also a few problems that came out of left field just when we thought we were literally "weathering the storm". Just prior to Christmas, our grounds were flooded with the waters six inches higher than previous records. The cottage at the entrance to the club plus several in Fegan's Court were inundated. Cars parked in Fegan's Court had water up to their steering wheels. Although we had seven courts under more than a foot of water, it thankfully stopped inches from the clubhouse door and the Dome survived. A massive clean up job, but more about that later.

I'm proud to report that we will get through this as a club. I'm pretty sure that everything that could have been done to remove variable costs has been done, including applying for rebates and grants, and as a result we will come out of this intact. Your memberships have in effect been frozen whilst we have been unable to play and you can read more about that on Page 2. The coaching team led by John Cavill have been busy with online programmes attaining some amazing success, rolling out the sessions across the country. John has been on regional and national television news promoting the coaching and our club. Membership as a result of this, and also I think our promptness at keeping everything we could open when we were able, has meant our membership remains buoyant. Many other clubs it seems either found the changes necessary to remain open too difficult and so we stood out last summer as an attractive place to get some exercise.

Yet again I hope you will all appreciate we are making no changes to our subscriptions, pleasingly our twelfth consecutive year of no increase. We are debt free and the continued prudent financial management of Adrian and Phyllis means we can still generate positive cash flow for the future.

I hope we will see all of you back on court from the 29th March and we will enjoy a long, hot summer of tennis. Please keep your eye on our website's Covid page for all the latest updates on the opening plans. If restrictions allow, we will hold a great big party with our new BBQ sometime in the summer!

Simon Burn, Chairman ✉

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Not a member yet? Join at
www.ssltc.co.uk/membership



Ground Development – 2020/21

As you have heard, we were very nearly completely flooded out on the 23rd December and the days following. Once the floods receded and it no longer was over the top of our Wellington boots we were able to assess the damage. A huge thank you to Paul Griffiths who has single handed, poured buckets of clean water onto the court surfaces and brushed the river silt off the playing surface. His laborious hard work has meant we have been able to avoid an insurance claim and all our courts will be open this spring.

At the beginning of the month we did finally removed the Dome. There was no chance of any indoor play being permitted in the short term, and important that we have all nine courts in operation for outdoor play throughout the summer.

What is still not clear at the time of writing is other than the outdoor courts, how much of the rest of the club we will be able to open. It is hoped that we can give access to the changing rooms and hallway as before Lockdown 2, but that will become clearer nearer to 29th March. The latest advice can be found at <https://www.lta.org.uk/globalassets/news/2021/summary-grid---permitted-tennis-activity.pdf>

Other work in preparation for re-opening includes tidying the garden adjacent to the cemetery wall and our groundsman will start to refurbish the tables on the veranda and progressively all the benches. Maintenance on the floodlights should also be concluded before end of March and the replacement to the CCTV security system has been in operation through Lockdown 3 (so that we could nervously watch the floodwaters creep up to the front door!).

John Taylor
Ground Committee Chairman



Treasurer's report – 2021

Well, what an incredibly stressful 12 months we have all been through. Unfortunately, many of us have experienced the loss of someone close to us due to this shocking pandemic. Hopefully, most of you will have had your coronavirus vaccination, or will be having it soon, which will protect you from the most severe effects of coronavirus and, also stop the spread of this dreadful virus.

Exercise can be a great way to alleviate stress and it

is encouraging that Boris has announced a "Roadmap" to open society which includes the return to outdoor tennis on 29th March. I'm sure that you can't wait to start running around a tennis court like a spring chicken to try to reduce your waistline which **may** have ballooned whilst in lockdown



Turning to the club finances, we are in relatively good shape considering the environment the club has had to operate in over the last twelve months. The decision to "give-back" the days missed by successive lockdowns, together with missed floodlight income, match fees, dome income and a whole load more, has meant we will have seen a drop in our income of more than 50%. We have of course not incurred some of the associated variable expense and have been working hard to mitigate the impact. By leaving the Dome up through the truncated summer 2020, we saved several thousand pounds and have been able to get a rebate on our business rates for Lockdown 1 and are applying for further rebates now. The way that we credit back the missed membership days will also mean that we can spread the impact over two financial years, critical for us to weather this storm.

All in all, cash and cash equivalents as at 28/2/21 are £136k. This is an improvement of £31k since the beginning of the financial year. The club's sinking fund for maintaining the club's facilities, including court replacement will be circa £110k at the end of the financial year. This amount is more than enough to meet our financial obligations for working capital and infrastructure improvements.

We obviously weren't able to hold an AGM last year, and it is looking unlikely that we will be able to hold one this spring either. Our full accounts were completed and reviewed by auditors however in April 2020 as usual and will be completed again next month for the current year. If you would like to see either set of accounts please get in touch.

We currently have 400 members, an increase of 64 (19%) since 1/4/20. Most of this increase is attributable to the Young and Junior categories. Although, it is pleasing to see adult membership increasing too.

Stay safe and I hope to see you on a tennis court soon!

Adrian O'Reilly
SSLTC Treasurer



Memberships

Your membership of our great club remains very important to us and we strongly believe you should not pay for membership you have not been able to enjoy. For this reason, very quickly last March we pledged to give back any missed days when you next renewed your membership. For many who renew on 1st April each year and have therefore been members throughout the three lockdowns, you will be

NOTICE BOARD

Club Closed Competitions

We hope to be able to run the annual club tournaments through to finals day this year. Fingers crossed. Sign up will have to be online only to sandaburn@hotmail.com. The following competitions will run subject to a minimum of 8 entries.

Ladies and Men Singles
Ladies and Men's Doubles
Mixed Doubles
Ladies and Men's O45 and O60 Singles and O60 Doubles

Junior events and entries will be advised by our Coaching team shortly. This is usually an extremely popular tournament so please ensure you sign up early and before 16th April.

12th Sept: Club Finals & BBQ


Social

For Social Events, as and when we are able to run them, please look either outside the Pavilion or inside in the hallway, and on the website calendar.

Team Tennis

If you are interested in playing for a team and do not currently do so, please inform our ladies' and Men's captains, Margaret Gurney or Mark Meagrow respectively (numbers and emails on the website)

Social Tennis & Day Time Play
Ladies Monday 13:00 to 15:00 (16:00 in Summer)

Wednesday mornings 9:30 to 12:00 and
Thursday Afternoons 1:00 to 3:00 pm. 

Are you retired / between jobs / children at school, and would like to play good mixed tennis and meet new friends, then get in touch with Phyllis on 01908 563025. A small charge of 10p covers the supply of Balls.

Club Night

Every Wednesday evening from 6:30pm, restarting on 31st March, and informal rollup on Sunday mornings from 10:00. Club night remains a core part of our club. All Full members are welcome, no matter what their standard of play and those present will try and match you with someone of similar ability. Whilst attendance is obviously optional we encourage you all to get to as many evenings as you can, meet other club members and enjoy the company.

given back those missed 163 days (51, 28 and 84 days for Lockdown 1 through 3 respectively). When you renew in the next week or so your new renewal date will be incremented by 163 days to the 10th September 2022.

For many others who renew at other dates through the year, you will also get these 163 days, or pro rata if you held back your renewal mid lockdown. Some will already have seen their membership renewal date incremented by the first one or two lockdowns and will be further incremented at their next renewal date for Lockdown 3.

All very complicated, but hopefully this will spread the impact on the club over a couple of subscription years. Memberships that expired mid lockdown and were then renewed when we re-opened will get a pro rata of those 163 days, so no one will have lost membership days as a result. If you are part of a government notified vulnerable group and your isolation extends beyond the reopening of the club, then your pro-rata will be calculated through to when you are able to come out of self-isolation. Please keep a copy of your government letter for us to know to include you and we will endeavour to work out your specific renewal date.

Whilst this is clearly a big hit to our club coffers, I hope you agree this is the right thing to do. Please also understand that this is a pro-rata against your renewal and cannot be a refund against previously paid subs. Your days will be given back at your next the renewal, not added to the current membership year so that we can be consistent with its application and are only doing it once. Please understand, If you chose let your membership expire, then I'm afraid you will lose out on this "give back", so please renew promptly when your time is due and for the sake of keeping us afloat.

Floodlight Tokens:

You will need tokens for most games after 6pm or before 8am. With the opening of the hallway, you will have access to the light boxes for Courts 1-7. Courts 8&9 are on the clubhouse wall. Please pre-purchase tokens from the [Online Booking page](#) on our website. Armed with your emailed receipt, you will need to collect the tokens from the club by pre-arrangement with 07905 366317.

Member Guests:

Members will be able to bring their guests to play at the club once again. We ask that you please pay for your guests at least one day in advance (Adults £5, U18s £2.50 for a one day pass, via BACs transfer to 30-15-53 A/C 0624 6708 with your surname as reference) and send an email to admin@ssltc.co.uk with the name(s) of your guest(s) and their contact details. Please make sure your guests follow the process for use of the changing rooms if needed.

Coaching progress



Introduction

Hello everyone. What a strange year we have had and I trust you are all safe and are looking forward to the resumption of tennis activities at the club on the 29th March. Tennis Works and the coaching team have naturally been unable to work on court during the lock-down periods and in some instances we have had to be imaginative. More about that later.

Coaching Programmes

Development Programme: This will recommence immediately upon the cessation of the current lock-down and run until the scheduled end of summer term. This will therefore be a 16-week programme, starting week commencing Mon 29th March until the week ending Sun 18th July. There will be no break during half-term and we are currently unsure as to what camp provision may be offered.

The weekly coaching develop programme will continue to offer 23 different sessions. There are sessions for Parents and Toddlers, Mini Tennis for ages 5 to 10, Junior Tennis for ages 11 to 16 and Adult Tennis for ages 17+, Adult Tennis Xpress for beginners. When able we intend introducing a multi-skills session for toddlers and a joint parent / young child lesson.

Whether you or your friends are new to the sport and have only just picked up a racket or have been playing for a while and want to take your tennis to the next level, there is a Tennis Works programme available to you. The programme will be available online soon at www.tennisworks.net/stony/coaching.

Summer Camps: 5 weeks from Mon 19th July to Fri 27th August

As yet we do not know what we may offer but will update

www.tennisworks.net/summercamps as soon as we are able.

Individual or Private Group Coaching

One of the best ways to improve your game is to get some private tuition and the Tennis Works professional coaches are at hand! For all enquiries, please call 0203 286 5590 or send an email to office@tennisworks.net and we will be able to suggest a coach to help you improve.

Competition Programme: This is an invitation programme for dedicated players who show tennis potential and who are dedicated to developing their skills. It consists of three distinct programmes. The Cavill Academy, Talent Development Programme and Top Squad. For further information please contact John Cavill direct at john.cavill@tennisworks.net

The Coaching Team

Tennis Works are now into their tenth year of providing coaching services at the club and the coaching programme continues to grow and it feeds our more able Juniors into the adult playing arena, participating in the Partners League as well as representing the club in the adult leagues. The coaching team consists of John Cavill (Director of Tennis and Senior Performance Coach), Phil Hill (Senior Master Coach), Lam Huynh (Club Development Coach), Richard Walters (Club Development Coach), and Jason Fairhurst (Club Development Coach) who joined us after the first lock-down. In addition, there is Alexander (Charlie) Green (Advanced Personal Trainer) and Level 2 coaches in Antonia Somers and Daniel Rowland. We also have a team of very able Assistants who are Juniors embarking on their tennis coaching journey whilst still at school. We have a clear itinerary of what is being delivered in each session, regular team meetings and coach educational workshops, both online and physically on court. Junior performance at the club continues to develop and we have increased the number of coaching hours available along with more individual sessions being done.

Lockdown activities

This past year has been a very strange and disruptive one with relatively little on court activity being allowed and we are extremely grateful to the many attendees of our programmes that left their credit on account enabling us to maintain a cashflow to support the ongoing and unavoidable business costs.

During the initial lock down (2020) the **Competition Programme** moved online and we offered weekly online events for those attendees who were interested, thankfully the support was excellent, thank you. This most recent lockdown has seen regular weekly zoom catch-ups with each group which has enabled attendees to interface with their friends. The Development Programme did not move online and naturally suffered due to the lock-down as well as the fact that non-members could no longer access our programme due to the restrictions.

The Schools outreach programme has been a success. Working in partnership with the Schools Sport Partnership John Cavill has been producing School Mission videos (www.tennisworks.net/future-tennis-stars) which have been circulated via the Schools Sports Partnership to all Primary Schools within the Milton Keynes area, some 90 schools. As part of this initiative all children are being offered a free session after lock-down at their local participating club which will hopefully lead to increased membership at Stony. John is also doing a weekly Saturday Facebook Live session from 9-9.30am (accessed via www.facebook.com/StonyStratfordTennisClub - Just like the page and you will be notified the next time we go live).

As a result of the above Tennis Unlocked was born (www.facebook.com/tennisunlocked) which saw coaches nationally link up with their local Schools Sports Partnership to deliver to their own areas. The results have been staggering with local and national press and TV coverage of this fantastic initiative to keep primary school children moving and get them interested in the wonderful sport of tennis.

Which finally brings us to the latest lockdown activity which sees the Tennis Unlocked team deliver the Red Nose Tennis Challenge to the UK. Have you done the Sock and thr Frying Pan challenge that is sweeping the nation and started at SSLTC. . 30secs to beat those that tag you. Please

visit www.tennisworks.net/rednose to learn about this wonderful fund- raising activity in aid of Red Nose day.

The Holiday Camp period saw us only able to offer small two hour blocks per day and naturally were not the success we are accustomed to. For all information relating to Tennis Works at Stony Stratford visit www.tennisworks.net/stony. Our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/stonystratfordtennisclub is the best way to keep up to speed with all the players progress and news around the club.

Sadly there will be no Easter Camps and no club Grade 4 Tournament this coming Easter. We, along with the club felt it was too ambitious to run these immediately on the cessation of the current lockdown.

We look forward to welcoming all club members to brush up on those rusty skills.

Melvyn Jones, Tennis Works Business Director and SSLTC Member
John Cavill, Director of Tennis, SSLTC, and Tennis Works ✉

Competitions

We are still awaiting details of club matches but are expecting them to resume shortly after the 29th March. The winter medley leagues for example are expected to continue to completion through the summer, replacing the summer mixed season. Other competitions will be announced shortly. If you are keen to play, please get in touch with our team captains, Margaret Gurney or Mark Meagrow, through their contact details on the website.

“Other News”

Wimbledon Ticket Ballot

The Ballot process has been changed once again, and all clubs nationally have now moved to a centralised system run entirely by the LTA. Members are still expected to “opt in” each year, but for 2021 we are still awaiting instructions on how and when that will happen. As a club committee we have some fundamental issues with the new system and have demonstrated to the LTA that it is both discriminatory and flawed on several occasions. We will wait until they issue the full instructions for 2021 before speaking to them again, but as a minimum to remain eligible, in addition to having opted in this year as a BTM member when you are permitted to do so, your club membership will need to be current.

Court Booking

You will be able to book courts for the 29th March from Monday 15th March and a rolling two weeks forward thereafter, so long as your membership remains current. Remember, you must please book all your courts and adhere to the instructions for safe play on our website at <http://www.ssltc.co.uk/covid-19.html>. The Grade 4 LTA tournament scheduled last year for the week of 29th March has been cancelled to ensure all courts are available to members from your first week back.

SHOP AND STRINGING SERVICES

Our shop, which is located upstairs in the clubhouse, is regularly open throughout the week but a quick call or email to office@tennisworks.net can always be made to arrange for the shop to be open. We offer equipment and clothing at highly competitive rates and have demonstration rackets across the entire Head range as well as being able to source other brands also. We offer racket repairs and restringing through John Skinner and our turn-round is usually within 48 hours.

Red Nose Day Tennis Challenge

Remember the Ice Bucket challenge? This is the tennis answer for Red Nose Day, started at SSLTC by John Cavill. Thirty seconds to see how many times you can bounce a rolled up pair of socks on a frying pan and then nominate ten friends. www.tennisworks.net/rednose

