



ILTSC AGM November 2023

Chairman's Report

Summary

This is the first report in the past 3 years where I can confidently say the club is back to its pre-pandemic levels, and now exceeding its financial performance prior to that period.

I have now sat on The Board for 4 years through some of the most challenging times in the Club's history. The current Board and those who have been members over the previous few years have worked tirelessly to ensure the club remained in a secure financial position. There have been significant changes over this period with some difficult decisions that had to be made.

Notwithstanding the difficulties there have been many positives, with the Club now benefitting from the decisions that have been taken. The Club is now in the strongest cash position since prior to the large re-development of 2015, and membership levels are in excess of those prior to the Pandemic.

The priority of any Board and Chair is for the Club to remain financially secure, this has been achieved. The Club must be run on a commercial basis and ensure a significant cash surplus is generated each year. Without this secure financial base, the club cannot continue to maintain or develop the facility and would be unable to provide the services our members require.

Despite the challenges faced, we have continued to move the club forward and below are some of the highlights in the last 2years:

- Invested over £115,000 in Riverbank Erosion works to protect the Club in coming years.
- Restructured and rebuilt the club's operational team, including the introduction of a Head of Rackets with the focus on improving our member experience.
- Resurfaced the Outdoor Hard Courts
- Built a community strategy that has achieved £40,000+ Tennis Foundation funding.
- Introduced Padel Tennis with the construction of a temporary court
- Invested in our current facilities with over £60,000 spent on Ad hoc maintenance and regulatory upgrades – electrical/boilers/fire systems
- Installed New LED lighting and renovated 2 squash courts
- Installed new LED lighting to the indoor tennis courts and achieved a local authority grant to fund a 1/3 of the overall installation cost
- Invested in new grounds equipment
- Funded new gym equipment and renewed all Spin Bikes
- Relaunched the Ilkley Trophy in 2022 and achieved a total improvement of over £200,000 compared to the 2years prior to Covid.
- Vastly improved the grass court quality with a long-term management plan and collaboration with the Sports Turf research Institute.
- Developed a long-term Masterplan to guide the club's overall development strategy in a cohesive manner

On reflection, a huge amount has been achieved, but we are very aware that we cannot be complacent. There is a significant amount to undertake over the coming years to ensure we maintain and develop the facilities and

continue to improve the member experience. My ambition has always been to create a Club that was central to our members lives and the wider community. We listen carefully to the feedback around the Club and we remain dedicated to creating a unique Club that will benefit the maximum number of current members and protect it for future generations.

I would like to thank all the past and current staff, management, Board and Committee Members who have supported the Club over the past few years to create this solid foundation we can now build upon.

Finally, this year marks the end of a 40 year era at the Club of our Head Coach, Simon Ickringill who retired in August. Simon has been instrumental in the progress of the Club throughout this period and played a huge part in so many of our lives during this time. The Club will be a different place without him and would like to express my thanks to him on behalf of the Club for his unrivalled dedication over the last 40 years. I would like to wish him all the best for the future and will look forward to welcoming him back to the Club as an Honorary Member.

Club Development and the Masterplan

The ongoing cost to maintain and operate the club will continue to rise year on year. The Club team has begun to look at the short- and medium-term capital expenditure that will be required to maintain and upgrade our existing infrastructure and equipment. Over the next few years the potential costs will require significant investment in excess of several hundred thousand and the Board and Management must therefore ensure we strive to increase the Club's overall surplus each year.

To do this, we must ensure we maintain our current membership levels, grow membership levels where there are opportunities and diversify our offering to increase secondary revenue and protect against external challenges. We want to do this without the need to substantially increase membership rates.

As many other clubs of our size are finding, they cannot rely upon their traditional income streams alone, many, as we are, continue to seek further opportunities with the introduction of additional facilities and services. Our long-term Master Plan was developed to ensure that as the club embarks on upgrades and the introduction of new facilities in a cohesive manner. Following the overall plan will ensure we do not detrimentally take short term decisions that will fundamentally hamper the long-term opportunities for future generations.

This year we will begin to embark on a series of projects that will be focused on maintaining of our current membership and improving the overall Club atmosphere. It is also important where we can, that investment is made in sustainable technologies to help reduce the long-term energy costs.

The works undertaken so far and those proposed are detailed below:

- The refurbishment of the gym's secondary room installing a large mezzanine and reconfiguring the existing gym space to provide a much more enhanced fitness offering that caters to the entire membership demographic.
- Installation of new lighting within the indoor tennis courts. This has been designed by an LTA technical advisor, has vastly improved the light quality and will save tens of thousands in electrical costs each year.
- The refurbishment of the café bar floor and potentially a larger facelift of the current fittings. Costs are being collated to decide on the extent of the works that can be carried out in the coming months.
- Installing a new trophy cabinet in the main entrance area to promote the achievements of our members and create a more aspirational sporting venue.
- £30,000 of electrical upgrades have been carried out and further upgrades to our external lighting will be undertaken to illuminate our secondary parking areas/pathways.
- £30,000 + of upgrades to our hot water and heating system have been carried out

In addition to the above we have now submitted a Pre-Application Enquiry to the local planning authority to help determine the likelihood of achieving planning for the proposed covered Padel courts. Once we have the feedback, we will be evaluating how to progress the Planning Application and consider the implementation/phasing.

The Ilkley Trophy

The past two years have seen the reinstatement of the Ilkley Trophy following two fallow years during covid. This year was hailed a huge success by many of the players, officials, spectators and LTA. It is clear the event can bring challenges to the club and its members, but also the ability to generate significant profit that can then be reinvested directly into the Club. This year we grew the tournament with enhanced food and beverage areas, the management of this by our new GM led to the tournament achieving almost double the profit we did in 2022. This will continue to help balance the clubs finances, allow membership subscriptions to be kept lower and permit the continued investment required to the facilities.

We are currently working on a year-by-year basis with the LTA but have been seeking longer term clarity on the future of the tournament for the past couple of years. At present we have minimal influence in finalising a longer-term contract as the overall grass court season is part of a larger review by the ATP/WTA/LTA and Wimbledon. The current feedback is very positive in relation to Ilkley and at this time would hope it will be part of the long term grass court season. By early next year we hope a decision has been made on the overall format of the pre Wimbledon series and give clarity to us in relation to the tournament hosting from 2025 onwards.

The Club Team and Board are very aware of the disruption that is seen throughout the summer period by not only the Ilkley Trophy but other tournaments throughout that period. There is 3/4 weeks of tournaments during the 20 week summer period where at times there can be limited court availability for members. We are continually working with the Club's operational team to ensure playing opportunities are provided. In the coming months we will be seeking further feedback from our all our membership to see what could be done additionally during these periods.

A club of our size and stature has received and will receive significant LTA support. To achieve this and maintain this into the future we must continue to support the growth and give opportunity for players to compete at both international and county level. All clubs of our size host tournaments throughout the summer and wider year, this coming year will see £13,000 funding for the maintenance of our grass courts for the hosting of County week alone. The partial funding of the indoor lights was a direct result of the prominence the Ilkley Trophy gave to the Club and positive interactions with the leaders of Bradford Council.

Although I have focused a lot on the financial performance of the Club I recognise the Club is fundamentally supported by its members year on year, however without the financial stability and revenue from all areas, we cannot provide the services or facilities the members require. This is a balance that we will continue to monitor and ensure we do everything to create a Club that its members are central to and can be proud to be part of.

Community Engagement – U3A

It continues to be my ambition to ensure that the Club was not just inward focused but central to the local and wider Community. In the last couple of years the Club has built a community strategy that considered how we could use the facilities for the benefit of the local community and how as a club we could lead the development of rackets sports in the Bradford area and all underprivileged areas of the region.

We have been working with local and national stakeholders to consider how to support our community and give opportunity to those not fortunate enough to have access to sport, and particularly racket sports. This has led to the creation of a strategy we now know as the Community Player Pathway. We hope in the coming months the Club will begin to deliver coaching throughout the Bradford area and within the newly refurbished Bradford Parks Venues. This will then allow us to create a link between community projects, park venues, clubs and finally development centres such as Ilkley.

Tom Loughton has been employed as our Rackets Manager and Community Outreach Coordinator to deliver our strategy and build a new coaching team throughout the community to create sustainable opportunities for underprivileged groups.

Earlier this Autumn we applied for a significant grant through the Tennis Foundation and were successful in achieving over £40,000 of support. This, in addition to external sponsorship and some of the profits from the Ilkley Trophy will allow us to support and give opportunity to a huge number of young and older individuals throughout our community take part in racket sports.

In addition to our wider community plans, our president and Fitness chair have worked closely with the local U3A to develop a new off-peak membership and series of activities throughout the week to support their work. This has been hugely successful and now sees over 100 individuals attend the club throughout the week during our quieter hours.

I hope that all our members can be proud to be part of a Club that is working to be at the forefront of our community and support those that don't have the same access to the amazing facilities that many of us do.

Looking Ahead

In addition to the continued development, tournaments and community work, the management and Board are committed to improving the experience for all our members and planning for the future.

Over the next year some of our aims are to:

- Ensure our committee and sub-committee are engaged with our members, focused on improving the member experience/satisfaction and helping to create a real club ethos.
- Review the current strategic plan that was created prior to Covid and realign this with our current ambitions. This will include a review of the club's brand and marketing strategy.
- Continue to be the Pre-eminent Rackets club in the North of England, providing:
 - o Great Service for our members and maximising sporting opportunities
 - o Become a hub for local and wider community activities
 - o A place where you to socialise and enjoy member focused events
- Improve the club's presentation and ensure consistency across all hours when the club is open
- Deliver the facility improvements planned
- Ensure we further improve The Ilkley Trophy, creating an international sporting event that the members and local area are proud to be part of
- Begin the delivery and roll out of our community strategy

A Final Thought

Our Club has always be proud of its members' achievements and over the last year I would like to acknowledge some of those who have excelled for Club, County and Country:

The following players have represented the county from under 8s upwards:

Monty Truss
Leo Hall
Hugo Asmussen
Isabella Egglestone
Isabella Asmussen
Sylvie Nichols
Ben Winterbottom
Thomas Nailer
Toby Shaw
Holly Huby
Alice Brook

A special mention goes to Alice Brook for representing under 18s and women's county team alongside securing a junior world ranking and a scholarship to Louisiana Tech University from September 2024.

Jo Craven was player captain of the Ladies County Team as well as representing the Over 35's.

Kyle Brassington played in the Men's County Team.

Six Ilkley members represented Yorkshire Men's Over 55s this year:

Andy Hutchinson
Gareth Hutchinson
Richard Hutchinson
Roger Kuhlmann
Cord Spilker
Chris Truss

Andy Hutchinson played for the International Club of Great Britain Men's Over 55s team in the Columbus Trophy held in Belgium. He also won two national Seniors' Open titles and has been invited to become the Head Selector for GB Seniors teams for the World Championships and Four Nations events.

Former ILTSC performance junior Alex Johnston made his debut for Gloucestershire Men's Over 35 team in the Senior County Cup this year.

Four Ilkley members were inducted into the inaugural Yorkshire Tennis Hall of Fame: Simon Ickringill, Andrew Hutchinson, Richard Hutchinson and Katie Charnock.

Our thoughts are also with the families and friends of members Hamish Currie and Phil Butler who passed this year.

Wishing you all the best,

Rik Smith
Chairman

12th November 2023