

Chairman's report for the 2018 AGM

The most important event over the last year has been the completion and opening of the clubhouse extension. The official opening took place in July with one of our longest serving club members and one of our newest junior members jointly cutting the ribbon. Much work went into preparing for this day and a large number of members and visitors attended the ceremony.

The increased space in the clubhouse and the extra light which now reaches all areas has made a tremendous difference when social events are arranged. In addition to our ongoing chess club there is now a thriving bridge group which meets twice a week and also a choir.

To ensure the best use was made of the new clubhouse facilities it was decided to employ a part time club steward who would be a welcoming presence for members and visitors and provide cakes and lunches and cater for other events. Carrie has filled this role admirably despite the hazards of unreliable ovens and less than ideal kitchen facilities. It is hoped that with the refurbishment of the kitchen which is now nearly complete, the coming season will be much easier for her. Over the winter, Carrie and Lesley and their helpers arranged a number of very successful Christmas and New Year events finishing in January with a most enjoyable "Mama Mia" evening. I really feel that the potential for increasing the social aspects of our club is being fulfilled.

Other construction work at the club in 2017 included the completion of the Clockhouse and the placement of a new coaches shed behind it, both of which have already proved their worth in providing extra facilities and storage space.

It was disappointing after all the hard work and the money that had been spent that we should have had a burglary in the autumn resulting in the loss of our new TV and sound system as well as damage to cupboards and the theft of some bar goods. As a result, we have now installed CCTV and a burglar alarm which is activated overnight. Members are asked to ensure that, during the day, the clubhouse is locked if they are the last person there, even if other activities will be taking place later that day.

You will have seen in the tennis report that the possibility of obtaining grants and loans for covered courts is being investigated and there are also ideas of creating a new east- west tennis court behind 1, 2 and 3. A lot of thought and work has to go into planning any new project as it is vital to ensure that our income will not only cover the cost of installation and any ongoing loan repayments, but also the year on year maintenance costs

A significant proportion of the money we receive from subscriptions is already ear marked for the sinking funds required for the replacement of the Astroturf courts as necessary, and also the clubhouse roof, which was only partially renewed when the extension was built.

In addition to this of course, money is needed each year for the management of the lawns, Astroturf and grounds generally.

Having mentioned the kitchen earlier I would like to express our gratitude to Vernon & Tom for taking this project on and spending innumerable hours on its installation. With rotten wood, sloping floors, episodes of illness and snow, they have had a lot to contend with.

I would also like to give special thanks to our Treasurer, Hilary Spurgeon, who was involved in much extra work managing the finances for the clubhouse extension and reclaiming money from Sport England as it became due. We are grateful for her vigilance and care in ensuring the club is not put at risk by unwise spending.

Finally, I will mention that when you renew your subscriptions this year you will be asked to complete both pages of the renewal form instead of only the first one. This is because of changes in Data protection law which will come into force in May 2018. Members will be asked to update their preferences as to how the club manages their data and must now actively “opt-in” or “opt-out” of the various sections. I wish you all a good 2018 season, whatever activities you enjoy at Ryde Lawn.