

HILLHEAD TENNIS CLUB ANNUAL REPORT

November 2021



A Year Through Covid

A very interesting year for Tennis; a sport which was impacted less than many others due to its native on-court social distancing. Lockdown presented a continual juggling act around what was and was not permitted throughout the varying restriction levels. Having been fully closed during the first lockdown of 2020, we were eventually permitted to continue, but with restrictions on player numbers, coaching, group activities and the availability of changing rooms/toilets, all dependant on which restriction tier we were in.



The Committee and Coaching team worked extremely hard during the ever-changing Covid landscape to maintain safe operations for all. We issued regular member communications, we continually updated our information/infographic posters and enhanced our online booking system and processes to tightly control attendance numbers and provide a “Track and Trace” capability. With the support of the Club, Committee and Members, we had no identified cases of Covid at the Tennis Club, allowing Tennis to continue mostly uninterrupted over the last 12 months.

First Full year with Ash

Our Head Coach Ash Webster has already made a massive impact on the Coaching program with growing demand and improving standards visible at all levels. He and his team have achieved this despite having the most difficult 12 months of ever-changing restrictions and limited access to the full Clubhouse facilities. Much of the recent growth in Member numbers can be attributed to this growth in demand for coaching and we continue to work closely with Ash to maximise this opportunity.



Numbers attending all areas of coaching are very healthy, with waiting lists in operation for some coaching sessions and perpetual discussions to balance court requirements for coaching against matches and general use. With the influx of new players, the Coaching team will be taking a more active role in assisting with player pool selections for next year’s teams, as they are best placed to judge ability and potential across the Club.

Ash has been working closely with the Coaching Team to enhance and develop their skills both on and off-court and, with the support of the Committee, will be continuing this development of the full Team over the coming year.

Youthful Exuberance



The trend of new members in the last year (and somewhat before) has shown the Tennis Club experience a shift towards younger players – but predominantly male. We are now reviewing this trend along with team player numbers (and successes), social player trends and general player activity across all ages and genders, to help us identify the areas where we feel we can progress and focus our efforts in the coming years to ensure Hillhead Tennis Club continues to thrive.



Our junior players are however certainly putting Hillhead firmly on the “Tennis Map”. With successes and finalist performances at Scotland Tour and County Tour Level, Fast 4 Regional, Tennis Solutions Masters (Bristol), Tayside U12 and Lanarkshire Open to name but a few, Hillhead is certainly on a good path.

It is very exciting to watch these young, talented players grow in confidence, ability and success, and we hope they continue to thrive and encourage others at Hillhead.



Junior player support initiative



One young Hillhead player who shows exceptional potential is Ares Power who we have selected as the first recipient of our Player Support Initiative. Under this, Ares will receive additional, personalised support from the Committee and Coaching Team, which may include coaching and mentoring, support with equipment, assistance in entering and playing tournaments or other support as deemed appropriate. We hope this will help Ares to reach her full Tennis Potential and become a force to be reckoned with in the coming months and years.

Good Team Performance With New Young Talent

The primary Summer Tennis Season has concluded, and we are now well into the Winter season which provides good team competition year-round. Our Teams enjoyed a very successful summer season, with some very strong results pushing the top three Men’s teams into higher divisions than in recent years, and the Women cementing their place among the stronger teams in the West. The Junior Girls enjoyed an exceptional season and continue to go from strength to strength, with the boys not far behind.

We are carefully considering our Team plans for next year and whether we will require additional teams to satisfy the growing number of players seeking Team competition. This year we had 54 teams playing in a variety of leagues, which creates a lot of court usage, so this needs very careful review against our other demands on court usage.

Club Championships



Despite being delayed by about 6 weeks (due to the league season overrunning from Covid Delays), our Club Champs proved a great success with high numbers of entries and (mostly) fair weather matches being played throughout. Final's day was a blustery but dry day, and all finals were played in excellent spirit. It was particularly encouraging to see so many new faces reaching the Finals and playing the matches in true "Hillhead" spirit, and to see so many spectators coming down to show their support for the finalists.

Social Tennis

Thankfully reducing restrictions and concerns around Covid have allowed us to return to our regular Social Tournaments, with Pizza's, Barbecues and a good deal of socialising taking place after to bring everyone together. These are always hugely popular with players of all abilities and provide a fun, relaxed way to get to know other players and maybe even take home a prize! Big thanks to Ash for organising these and keeping us all in check. We hope to continue these approximately bi-monthly throughout the year, so keep an eye out for announcements and entry details.



Our recurring weekly social sessions also returned this year (initially with track and trace requirements) but are now back to normal "turn up and play". We are aware that these are often disrupted during match seasons and will be reviewing the scheduling next year to try and minimise this where possible. These are a great chance for players to just come along and mix around and all abilities are welcome. Check the website/social media for full details.

Member Numbers and Court Congestion

Limited access to other activity made Tennis a very attractive sport for many during lockdown, and as a result member numbers continued to swell throughout the year - now at over 470 Tennis members. While this is positive from a Sports Club Subscription perspective (bringing them much needed income), reduced group activity and lots of "working from home" meant a lot of players making full use of courts at all hours of the day, making it very congested at all times. In order to reduce this congestion, we had to implement a fair usage policy and, for a short while, to restrict new joiners on a waiting list basis.

Thankfully as we trend towards the old "normality" again, we can relax some of these measures and once again welcome new members and occasional guests to Hillhead Tennis Club. We are however continuing to monitor player numbers and court usage, and have set a ceiling of 500 members max to maintain a respectable availability over the winter. We may revise this number in early Spring as matches commence and the warmer weather starts to bring more players back to the courts.

New Website and Social Media Presence

In an effort to improve and consolidate our Communication methods to members and beyond, we are working on reducing the number of channels/groups we have currently and focussing on our Website, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram pages becoming the primary means of rapid communications.



We recently launched our new, simplified website which allows us to make easier, faster changes and keep it more up to date than the old one, which had become unmaintainable. We also formed a Social Media Sub Committee* to take responsibility for creating content and posting on these channels and are delighted that there is a significant improvement in the quantity and quality of postings, as well as good growth in the followers and interactions from members and beyond.

Maintenance



The past year saw the introduction of a new Grounds maintenance Contractor to Hillhead Sports Club and we have been working closely with them to improve the maintenance undertakings for the Tennis Courts. Our continual battle remains to keep the sand on the courts (and not in the car park/cars/houses/bags) and so we would ask that everyone to give their shoes a bang with a racket before leaving the courts and remember to brush their shoes on departure.

We are monitoring the bumps caused by roots at the rear of courts 5 & 6 and are advised that this could be just the swelling of the previously killed tree roots which will eventually decay and subside. We have also arranged for trimming of all trees surrounding the courts when the leaves have (finally) stopped falling.

We have been working hard to maintain operational floodlights over the last year and are currently arranging for repair of the 2 failed floodlights. We have also been working with the Sports Club Board to agree a plan for replacement of all floodlights with modern LED's over the course of the winter and hope to announce more on this soon.

We have replaced the old plastic, court benches with wooden ones this year and have dedicated two of them to much loved members who are no longer with us, namely Alison Romanis and Walter Steedman. We hope players enjoy taking the time to spare a thought for them (and others no longer with us) while taking a short breather on these benches between games.



Eddy continues to undertake most of the smaller jobs which require to be done around the courts (from bins to benches; drag mat repairs to installing safety netting; managing match balls to engraving) and we thank him for the time and effort he puts in.

Personal Thanks

I would like to personally thank the Full Committee, Coaching Team and others who assist us from time to time for their efforts over a very difficult past 12 months. It never ceases to amaze me how this Club can flourish under the most challenging of times, but I think that is a massive credit to the welcoming, fun and inclusive nature of the Club.

It is approaching 100 years since Tennis was first played at Hughenden (the first major sporting event at the Club was the Finals of the West of Scotland Tennis Tournament in 1925) and I hope this spirit will continue for at least another 100 years to come.

Keith Fowler
Hillhead Tennis Club.

HTC Committee and other deputies:

<p>Isobel Campbell</p>  <p>Coaching Sub Committee and Full Committee Member</p>	<p>Carlos Celis-Morales</p>  <p>Social Media Sub Committee and Full Committee Member</p>	<p>George Cheyne</p>  <p>Club main Contact and Match Secretary</p>
<p>Fraser Copeland</p>  <p>Website, Emails and Full Committee Member</p>	<p>Keith Fowler</p>  <p>Committee Chair and Coaching Sub Committee</p>	<p>Ed Gallagher</p>  <p>Treasurer, Maintenance and Covid Officer</p>
<p>Shona Ross</p>  <p>Coaching Sub Committee and Full Committee Member</p>	<p>Stuart Trotter</p>  <p>Safeguarding Officer</p>	<p>Ash Webster</p>  <p>Head Coach</p>

***Social Media Sub Committee Members:** David Byrne, Carlos Celis-Morales, Neil Douglas, Jotie Jaidka, Lynda Macdonald, Andrew Mccullough, Baljinder Purba, Sandy Thomson and Ash Webster