

Hadley Wood Association – Annual General Meeting

Update from the Tennis Club – November 2021

We saw a marked increase in our membership numbers during 2020, and 2021 has remained stable at this new level (200 members). This increase was attributed to more people working from home, the benefit of having outdoor facilities vs indoor, and great summer weather in 2020.

As well as increased membership fees, we secured a Covid grant from Enfield Council for £5,000 and received a repayment holiday on our Loan as well as a suspension of some of our LTA fees during 2020. All of this positively impacted our sinking fund. On the downside, we have been unable to hold our normal social activities, including the cancellation of Hadley Wood Fireworks event in 2020 and lower bar income due to the number of weeks the Club has had to close due to Covid.

We are up to date with our Licence payments to Hadley Wood Association but have recently been presented with a further fee of £3000 by them, reflecting an increase in our annual payments of c.43% (current annual fee £6,995 with proposed increase to £9,995). Hadley Wood Association has said that this increase is subject to discussion, and we are challenging it. The Tennis Club fully acknowledges the need for increases in payments from time to time but would expect these to run at inflationary increases and not wholesale changes to the current model. That said, we have an open and cooperative relationship with HWA and anticipate resolution that reflects what is best for the facilities that are provided for the Hadley Wood Community as a whole.

In 2020 and 2021, we held back from undertaking any major maintenance of the courts in order to increase our sinking fund which had been at a minimal level for several years due to low membership numbers and the result of previous works to the court surfaces. In that regard, in March 2021, Stuart Martin (Head Coach) and I met with Terry Clarke, Managing Director of 1st Surface Limited, to discuss what options we have available to us to improve the playing surfaces of our courts generally. Terry had various suggestions for us and confirmed that the cost of re-doing each court on a like for like basis would be in the region of £40k to £50k per court. As we must re-cover 2 courts at the same time, the cost of this is significantly beyond the reach of the Club as it stands today. However, re-covering the two macadam courts would be more affordable, providing we can address the tree root problems. To undertake this work on these courts would be considerably cheaper than re-doing the other courts and for c.£35k we could potentially resurface both.

This is our challenge for 2022 as it will improve dramatically the view of the tennis courts and make the macadam courts a far more attractive playing option. But it will be a challenge from a financial perspective. The increase in Licence payment that has been presented to us does not help the position. If we go ahead with the macadam court resurface, if anything else should fail on any of the courts, e.g. flood lights, surface damage, fencing etc. we will not be able to resolve them until we

replenish our sinking fund. As you must appreciate, upkeep and maintenance of the courts is very expensive.

As well as resurfacing works, we are also looking at whether we can introduce Padel Tennis to Hadley Wood and alter one of the other courts into a Padel Tennis Court. For anyone who doesn't know about Padel, it is the fastest growing sport in Europe currently but is only just beginning to take off in the UK. This has the potential to bring additional income into the Club and help alleviate some of the financial constraints we experience as a small Club.

We have begun discussions with another company, Game4Padel, about the potential for turning Court 3 into 2 x Padel Courts. Game4Padel has an interesting model for helping Clubs get started with Padel in that they will design, build and finance the courts for you and assist in the marketing and operating of them.

At the moment, this is all very 'conceptual' but very interesting - discussions are only at an early stage. Our ability to take a proposition like this forward is also affected by the Lease term that HWA has with Enfield Council for our existing facilities and, until that has been extended beyond the 9 years that it currently has left to run, we potentially won't be able to take this further. But it does allow us time to take stock of our position and hear from our members as to whether they are enthusiastic about introducing Padel to the Club.

Our Ladies and Men's teams are now back playing. We currently have 5 teams competing, all of which have seen some successful wins. Our Junior Tennis coaching and holiday camps are now back to normal, as are our Ladies Tuesday morning session and Friday morning 'Come and Play' sessions. We have recently concluded our annual Club Tournament and are hopeful that we can move forward without any further interruptions to play! All our Coaches offer individual coaching sessions and are kept busy with this, but we are always keen to welcome any new members that would like to join us.

Alison Moon

Chair – Hadley Wood Lawn Tennis Club