**SQUASH & RACKETBALL SECTION – CAPTAIN’S REPORT**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 4th November 2020**

The last AGM was held 21st November 2019, and, in the usual manner, we have been asked by the General Committee (GC) to convene our Squash Section AGM in advance of the main club AGM on 9th December 2020.

**Committee**

During the year Jonathan Peak stood down as Men’s Captain but has agreed to remain on the Committee as Competitions Organiser. Taking over the Men’s Captain role will be Ali Jafari. Kirk Alexander took on the Treasurer position during 2020 and has kindly agreed to continue in this role for 2020/21. Steven Rawden is stepping down as Racketball League Organiser and Jonathan Partridge has agreed to take on this role. Accordingly, the only vacant position is for the role of Secretary. If you are interested in taking on this role, please contact me.

**Squash Captain** Graeme Mascall

**Secretary** **VACANT**

**Treasurer** Kirk Alexander

**Men’s Captain**  Ali Jafari

**Ladies Captain**  Jessamy Linford

**Squash League Organiser** Andrew Campbell

**Racketball League Organiser** Jonathan Partridge

**Competitions Organiser** Jonathan Peak

**Social**  Jack Parkin

**Welfare**

As the designated Welfare Officer for the Squash Section, I can confirm that no incidents have been registered or brought to my attention since our last AGM meeting.

On a community aspect, WBC are looking at participating in a social prescribing project being run by Think Active (our local arm of Sport England). This will potentially involve all of our sporting Sections and is being run to encourage those who have had challenges to reintegrate with ‘society’. Further information will be supplied if, and when, the project ‘goes live’.

**COVID-19**

As per the other sporting Sections, we have agreed to follow the guidance issued by our relevant sporting body, England Squash. If you are an England Squash registered member you will have automatically received those updates; if not, they can be found on their website [www.englandsquash.com](http://www.englandsquash.com) or social media platforms @englandsquash . If you follow Warwick Boat Club on either twitter or facebook their posts will be viewable there too.

A challenging task we as a Committee had to discuss and agree upon was a date upon which to end the freeze on membership subscriptions for those persons who requested the same. With thintroduction of squash ‘bubbles’ allowing effectively full play a date of 1st September 2020 was agreed. For those of you who have continued to pay your membership subscriptions in full I would like to thank-you for supporting the club during this challenging time.

Looking forward, we continue to monitor the tier status of Warwick and surrounding areas and are in touch with Warwickshire Squash (Chris Hall) who are co-ordinating queries to/from England Squash and sharing ideas and discussions between clubs.

As your designated COVID-19 officer for the Section if you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. In the meantime, please ensure that you scan the NHS COVID QR code on the left hand side as you enter the squash courts to assist with track and trace (should this prove necessary)

**Membership**

Across all WBC membership categories there are 365 members who are entitled to play squash. In terms of our core active adult members, we have remained broadly consistent at around 90 (pre-COVID).

**Finances**

Our annual budget was submitted and duly approved by the GC. However, in light of COVID and steps taken by the GC to mitigate expenditure whilst the club was closed, a revised budget was prepared to reduce outgoings. We managed to secure a small “Bounce Back” grant from England Squash and continue to monitor other grant schemes that we might be entitled to claim for. Otherwise, I am pleased to report that we are currently ‘in surplus’ and further details will be presented at the meeting.

**Team Squash**

Our Men’s 1st team finished mid-table in division 4 in the main winter Warwickshire League (2019-20). Our 2nd team ended up in 7th place and consolidated their position in division 6. The 3rd team is continuing to improve with a mid-table finish in division 7. Our ladies’ team, competing in division 2, finished in a commendable 5th place.

For obvious reasons there has been no summer leagues played during 2020 and it is highly unlikely that the main Warwickshire winter leagues will recommence for the 2020/21. However, whilst court use is low, we are introducing Men’s Team Training on a Monday evening run by Ali Jafari. These sessions will start at 6:30pm and will focus on fitness, movement and technical aspects. Alison Insley is also looking to establish a Ladies Team session on Saturday mornings. If you are interested in attending, please contact Ali Jafari or Alison Insley direct.

Whilst not relevant at present, a reminder for members who wish to play in the Warwickshire Leagues; you must have an activated England Squash account in order to be eligible. If you are interested in playing team squash please contact either myself, Ali Jafari or Jessamy Linford.

As and when team matches recommence, the intention will be to utilise the caters who operate the club café. Discussions have yet to be held over cost per-head but that information will be relayed to the team squad once agreed.

**Coaching**

As you hopefully will have all seen in the clubs All 4 One publication earlier this month, we have had a changing of the guard on coaching. Jonathan Peak is stepping down as coach and I would like to express a special thank-you for his enthusiasm and contributions under this role. Taking over the reins I would like to introduce Ali Jafari who returns to WBC after a stint in Australia and Solihull Arden . For those who have yet to meet Ali, he is offering a free 20 minute session, which I would encourage you to take up. Coaching will continue on Tuesday and Friday evenings for 1-2-1 sessions and Saturday afternoons (5 to 7pm) for group coaching which is for all standards.

Existing ladies team player, Alison Insley, will also be offering coaching if anyone is interested in very early morning slots.

Together, Ali and Alison will be looking to take strides to establish junior coaching so we can get some new young blood in to the Section. If you have any children or grandchildren who you think would be interested in giving squash a try please contact either Ali or Alison. Both are England Squash qualified coaches with enhanced DBS accreditation.

**Competitions & Leagues**

In light of the COVID-19 situation we had little option but to cancel both the individual Spring and Autumn team competitions. It is our intention to run an event as a when we return to full and completed unrestricted play.

With the introduction of squash / racketball ‘bubbles’ we have introduced informal bubble leagues which are being administered by Andy Campbell (squash) and Jonathan Partridge (racketball). These will not run month to month as there needs to be a minimum period of seven days without play, before changing squash bubble/league.

**Court Availability**

Whilst this is not an issue at the current time, I am keen that is kept under review by the Committee. As and when play returns to pre-COVID levels the matter will be discussed further.

**Maintenance**

It is proposed that during 2021, we will carry out once ‘final cycle’ of court maintenance that will hopefully take us up to the development of the club’s facilities. The cost to clean the walls, sand the floors and remark both courts is £1,500 (£1,250 + VAT) and subject to no objections these works will be booked in over two days (one for each court). A cost is also being secured to ‘freshen up’ the entrance into the squash block [has this been received ?]. Other standard annual maintenance will continue i.e. heating, drains/pumps .

A number of members have kindly mentioned/volunteered about having a day one weekend to give the squash court lobby and viewing gallery areas a proper tidy and ‘touch-up’. If you are interested in lending a hand, please let me know. Refreshments and snacks will be provided.

Finally, contractors have been instructed to service the water cooler between the squash courts so that this can be brought back in to use.

**WBC Development Proposals**

I am delighted to confirm that the club secured planning consent on 21st October 2020 for the development proposals. Full details of the application, plans and supporting documents can be seen on the WDC planning portal (reference W/20/0439). The hard work now starts in respect of fundraising and, subject to members approval, detailed design and costing.

**Social**

During the last 12 months we have somewhat curtailed ! But looking forward we hope to:-

* Host our annual contest with Porthcawl Squash Club.
* Participated in World Squash Day 2021
* Hold our annual summer BBQ
* Attended the finals of the PSA Canary Wharf Classic Tournament 2021.
* Contest an evening of darts at Flight Club in Birmingham
* Have an afternoon of play on the squash doubles court at the University of Warwick
* Watch some PSL (Premier Squash League) matches live at either the University of Birmingham or Kenilworth Squash Club.
* Put in a stronger performance and hopefully wrestle the McClosker Trophy (Rowing) back from the Tennis Section.

As a Section we have sought to make better use of the club’s social media platforms and noticeboard/whiteboards to relay information in respect of both playing and social activities. If you are not already familiar our current digital platforms, these comprise:- WBC website, Facebook page, Twitter feed (@warwickboat) and Instagram (warwickboatclub).

On a final note, please remember the Section is what we all make it. We, as a Committee, put a lot of time and effort in to try and provide the best squash/racketball experience we can. If you are interested in getting involved in any of the matters above, serving on the Committee, or have any ideas or constructive comments, then I would be delighted to hear from you.

Regards,

**Graeme Mascall**

**Squash Captain**

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