



Despite these tough economic times I hope you are looking forward to the forthcoming tennis season. For those intrepid members who have braved the cold, I hope you have been enjoying your winter tennis.



So, now is perhaps a good opportunity to update members on what the new Tennis Committee have been doing since the AGM last November. I am delighted to say that a number of people have stepped forward to join an enlarged Committee (see below) so that we can put real energy behind addressing some of the challenges we face. What is clear is that there is a lot to do!

While there are many powerful reasons to be a member of Dukes Wood, there is no disguising the fact that we're not quite where we want to be as a thriving tennis club. Our membership has declined by 31% over the last two years and our junior membership has more than halved.

Members' responses to last year's questionnaire identified many different concerns about aspects of the club with the state of the courts, lack of access, junior coaching, lack of floodlighting and insufficient organised play all coming in for frequent mention. These issues, coupled with the increases in membership subscriptions in recent years, forced many members to feel that membership of the club no longer represented good value for money and as a consequence some did not renew their membership in 2008. This is a situation we absolutely must reverse and I can assure you that your new committee are determined to do this, I hope with your continuing support, in the coming months.

Two months in we have a lot of work underway on a number of fronts and I would like to update you on some of the things we have been doing. I shall keep you posted on these and other initiatives as further progress is made.

Firstly, we have made a commitment to become an **LTA accredited 'Clubmark' club**. At present, there are only five Clubmark clubs in Buckinghamshire. Gaining Clubmark status will require us to put in place proper arrangements for every aspect of the club and have these assessed against LTA standards. We will need to show that we have:



- A Club **Action Plan**,
- A range of effective **Tennis Programmes** for all members (adults and juniors) for both social and competitive play and coaching,
- Policies and Procedures for Child Protection, Equality and Health & Safety, and
- Good Club Management.

The process of putting all the necessary arrangements in place is going to take quite a bit of work and take us most of this year. Critically, when we obtain Clubmark status, we shall be in a strong position to access the range of LTA financial support programmes which will be so vital in terms of our future development as a club. This will give us a great foundation on which to build.

Secondly, we have undertaken a thorough review of all **membership subscriptions** to ensure the new season's rates represent better value for money for all our members. The Fees for the 2009 season are:

<i>Membership Category</i>	<i>2008 Fees £</i>	<i>2009 New Fees £</i>	<i>% Reduction</i>
<i>Seniors</i>	229	199	13%
<i>Couples</i>	392	345	12%
<i>Families</i>	464	399	14%
<i>Mid Week</i>	153	138	10%
<i>Under 25s</i>	137	126	8%
<i>1st Junior</i>	112	75	33%
<i>2nd Junior</i>	84	60	29%
<i>Students</i>	85	75	12%
<i>Minis</i>	44	42	5%
<i>Social</i>	33	30	9%

These new subscriptions represent not just a significant reduction on last year's rates but place us at a distinct advantage to other neighbouring clubs such as Bull Lane whose rates are significantly more expensive. For example, on the Seniors' rate we are fully £116 per year less costly and for family membership more than £280 cheaper! On juniors, the position is even more marked with an under 18 junior at Dukes Wood paying less than half the Bull Lane rate. So what better incentive could people need to become a member of Dukes Wood in these straitened economic times? Please tell your friends to consider Dukes Wood

before renewing their Bull Lane subscription and, perhaps, remind those members who left us in 2007 and 2008 to give Dukes Wood another chance and save money in the process of joining a friendly and ambitious Club.

As an extra incentive, the Club is currently running a special promotion for new and previous members. The offer gives these new joiners up to 2 extra months club membership for the price of 12, offering even greater value for money. Please see the last page of this newsletter for the full details and an application form to pass onto your friends. This form can also be used to renew your own membership for the 2009/10 season.

Thirdly, we are well advanced with the selection process for a **new Head Coach** to be appointed in April, when Andrew leaves us. We have had an encouraging response to the adverts we have placed and we shall begin interviewing in the next couple of weeks.

In addition, we are preparing a plan for the **renewal of the courts**, with the likely introduction of a **new playing surface**. This will be expensive, but we feel it is essential to the long term survival of the club and will be to the benefit of all tennis club members. It is likely to take several years to raise the required money to do all the courts, but we hope to be in a position to start laying a new surface on the first two of our courts within the next couple of years.



At the same time, we are going to resubmit planning permission for the installation of **Floodlighting**, probably on courts 1 and 2. This will be the fourth attempt in recent years, the previous three attempts having foundered on the objections of neighbours. However, the fact that Dukes Wood is probably the only local club without floodlights puts us at a serious disadvantage and undermines our attempt to develop the club for the benefit of the local community. Without a vibrant and successful Tennis Club, the very stability of Dukes Wood Sports Club is undermined. We shall be making this clear in our submission to the authorities when we make our next application. We also hope to gain the support of the majority of objecting neighbours this time round.

Finally, we are looking to re-vitalise the **Events and Entertainment programme** for the coming year and already Helen Marlow and Beverley Halliday have organised and run two very successful events – a Christmas Fair and most recently a ‘sell-out’ Burns Night Supper which, whilst being very enjoyable, also raised much needed funds for the Club. The next events for your diary are the **New Season Supper** on 3rd April 2009 and a **Race Night** at the Club on 15th May 2009. Watch out for details in the coming weeks.

We have many other ideas and the Committee recognise that there remains a lot to do. In concluding however, please let me stress, this is not a crisis and the Club is not in danger. We are determined to put Dukes Wood back in its position as the friendliest, most welcoming club in the area. Ideally, we want to make Dukes Wood the *‘Tennis Club of choice’* for juniors and seniors alike.

I hope that you will renew your membership for the coming season using the enclosed form. Please encourage your friends and neighbours to come and join us as well. If every member could find just one additional member for the coming season, this would be tremendous. So, please give it a go!



If you have other ideas or things you want me or the Committee to know, do drop me an e-mail (tennis@gxsc.co.uk) or have a chat to me when you are up at the Club. I really would welcome your thoughts.

Thank you.

With best wishes for the coming season,

Bob Mason
Chairman, Dukes Wood Tennis Committee

January 2009

2009 Tennis Committee:

Tim Barber
Angie Brady
Richard Cox
Beverley Halliday (Events)
Linda Kimberley
Richard King
Rachel Knight

Monica Lawrence (Communications)
Helen Marlow (Events)
Bob Mason (Chair)
Steve Prokopiou (Treasurer)
Paul Richmond (Secretary)
Gillian Vargassoff (Membership Secretary)
Allan Watson



GERRARDS CROSS (DUKES WOOD) L.T.C.

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e-mail: tennis@gxsc.co.uk Website: www.gxsc.co.uk/tennisclub

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Applications & Renewals 2009

Please complete **one form per household** and send it, with your cheque for the TOTAL payable to **Gerrards Cross (Dukes Wood) LTC**, Gillian Vargassoff, 36 Howards Wood Drive Gerrards Cross SL9 7HW 01753 883469 gvargassoff@googlemail.com
 Please do NOT send or deliver your form and/or cheque to the Club. **PLEASE NOTE THAT RENEWALS ARE DUE BY 31ST MARCH 2009 in order to retain membership.**

Family Name			
Address			
Post code			Tel nos.

First Name and E mail address *	Membership Code	Ann. Sub.	Juniors and Minis only		
			Date of Birth	School	Boarding
					Yes/No
					Yes/No
					Yes/No
					Yes/No
					Yes/No
Total for Annual Subscriptions					
Entrance Fee(s) – if applicable**			Referral Reference (first time applications only) Please indicate the name of the existing member who introduced you to the Club:		
TOTAL PAYABLE					

* E-mail addresses will be used for Club mailing purposes and will be published on the membership list (seniors only)
 Please tick here if you do not wish your email to be included on the membership list.

Schedule of Charges				
Membership Category	Membership Code	Annual Subscription £	Joining Fee £	
Senior (18+ at 31/12/2008)	Full Senior	FS	199	nil
	Couple	CPL	345 per couple	nil
	Mid-week (up to 5:30 on weekdays)	MW	138	nil
	Under 25 (on 31/12/2007)	U25	126	nil
	In Full-time Education	FTE	75	nil
	Social (non-playing)	SOC	30	nil
Junior (8-17 on 31/12/2008)	1 st Junior per household	J1	75	nil
	2 nd and subsequent Juniors per household	J2	60	nil
Mini (under 8 on 31/12/2008)	All mini members	MIN	42	nil
Family	Parents and unlimited Juniors	FAM	399 per family	nil
All Categories	Membership cancelled	CAN	-	-

Validity: This form is valid for applications and renewals between January 2009 and 31st March 2010.