

First Serve

The Alton Tennis Club Newsletter

Alton
Tennis Club

March 2008

2008 – anyone for tennis?

Chairman's note

Firstly I trust everyone is looking forward to getting back to tennis now that spring is just around the corner. We had a great year in 2007, with an influx of new members, some real momentum with our juniors, great performance by our teams in the leagues, and some very enjoyable social evenings. I hope you enjoyed your membership of Alton Tennis Club in 2007.

But what about new facilities?

In the very real sense that when you come down to the Club and it is just as it was last year it may seem as though there has been no progress in our quest to receive funding through the Coors redevelopment of Anstey Road for the extra tennis facilities that the community of Alton so clearly needs.

However, we have made some real progress. Our lobbying last year brought to the attention of Sport England and EHDC the very valid need for new facilities to support tennis in Alton, and our support of junior coaching, mini tennis programmes and Return to Sport initiatives brought us television and local press coverage.

In particular I would like to thank those of you who took time to write or register support for increased tennis facilities in Alton. Your active support was definitely a factor, and if you know any local politicians, please continue to keep our cause in the front of their minds!

The net result is that the last Coors proposal for the redevelopment of Anstey Rd included the funding for two extra courts for our club!

While this is great news, there is a real risk that the project is cancelled by Coors or rejected by the local authority, factors outside of our control. The committee does feel though that with the strength of the case for tennis, and the support of Sport England, we stand a good chance of getting the necessary funding if the project goes ahead. But when it will happen is anybody's guess. We will keep you informed if anything breaks.

Elsewhere, we have set up a separate fund-raising sub-group who
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2008 Club tournaments

This year we are trying something different for our club doubles tournaments.

We want as many members as possible to take part in the qualifying days by running these as 'American style' tournaments. These will operate in just the same way as our regular 'American' tournaments which are always popular, provide a good days tennis for everyone - regardless of individual standards - and produce a final 'order of merit' which will give us our finals qualifiers. One of the benefits is that it you can still take part in the qualifying tournaments even if you can't play on finals day since the highest placed player *able to play on finals day* will go through. So, the dates for your diaries (each with a 'backup' day in case of rain, on the day following) are :-

LADIES & MENS DOUBLES

6th Sep

MIXED DOUBLES

13th Sep

FINALS DAY

20th Sep

The singles competitions will be played in the traditional knockout format, with matches played throughout the summer and the finals on **FINALS DAY**.

Full details and rules about the Qualifying American Tournaments will be posted on the clubhouse notice board well before the events.

It would be great to see as many members as possible on FINALS DAY so bring something to eat and drink and make a day of it!

Renew your membership

Renew by 1st May and enjoy discounted rate

Attached to this newsletter is the Membership renewal Application Form. We are offering a special reduced rate to all of you renewing during April, so don't let this form fly around on the kitchen table – complete it, attach a cheque, return it to us, and continue to enjoy your tennis for another twelve months.

We will be changing the padlock combination on 1st May, to ensure your security and access. We will let you know the new combination on enquiry.

Photographer needed

Are you a whizz behind the lens? If so, we need you!

As part of our fundraising efforts, we are looking for someone who could help us produce some good action shots of our club. If you could help, read the Fundraising article on page 3 and contact John Hubbard (hubbardj@gotdsl.co.uk).

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are looking at how we can move forward to gain funding for the other facilities we would like to see for the club, namely extended clubhouse and lighting for the two existing courts. I am grateful to John Hubbard and Debbie Jones who have stepped up to help us. If anyone else would like to be involved in fund raising, we would love to speak to you. Please contact me on Adrian.m.jones@virgin.net.

Elsewhere the website seems to be working well as a place of reference for what is going on at the club. We have an exciting programme of events for this year, social, tennis and team events. We hope you will join us and make 2008 an even more enjoyable year than 2007 for our Club.

I look forward to seeing you down at the Club during the year.

Adrian Jones
Chairman, Alton Tennis Club

LTA Membership

The LTA has changed the membership system and all tennis players are being encouraged to join individually this year without charge. You can register on the LTA website & record your membership with Alton Tennis club. As well as offering some incentives to individuals who register there may be advantages to Alton Tennis Club if a large number of our members register under this scheme. This could be helpful in increasing our future allocation of Wimbledon tickets & could influence any funding requests we may make to the LTA or others. <http://www.lta.org.uk/membership/>

“Clubmark is coming to Alton Tennis Club”

To the uninitiated, Clubmark is the LTA's quality accreditation for tennis clubs and comprises of a set of standards by which the LTA can measure a club's ability to function efficiently and honourably. These standards include coaching programmes, accounting principles, policies and procedures to name a few, and provide each club with a structure within which to operate.

In some ways we could carry on playing tennis without it. However, Clubmark will help us to ensure we have the right facilities and processes in place, particularly to protect and encourage our juniors. The committee have decided to apply for Clubmark recognition, as we believe that it is in the best interest for our club.

If you want to know more – please see Ian, who will be only too happy to listen and answer any questions.

CLUB SESSIONS

TIME TUESDAY & THURSDAY EVENINGS

WEDNESDAY (1.30-5PM) & SUNDAY

Sunday morning club session tennis will commence on Sunday 30th March – 10am.

ENQUIRIES TO JUDY BROWN ON 01420 82289

WINTER TEAMS UPDATE

Four teams have been representing us in matches against other clubs during the winter season involving over twenty five of our members playing in Mens and in Ladies doubles in the Aldershot District and East Hants Leagues.

Our mens 'Aldershot' team, captained by Gary Johnson, and our 'East Hants' ladies team, captained by Judy Brown, have both won promotion by winning their divisions! A great achievement and our congratulations go to them along with wishes of good luck for next year when they will be squaring up to even tougher opposition.

Our two other teams had both gained promotion last year and were therefore aiming to consolidate their positions during this season and this, we believe, they have done.

The mens 'East Hants' team, captained by Doug Palmer, still have one match to play but should have done enough to stay in division one while the 'Aldershot' ladies team, captained by Sue Hubbard, have secured their place in the premier division in an excellent season which even included a win over the existing title holders.

As you can see by these superb results, in competitive tennis, we 'punch well above our weight' competing on equal terms with other clubs in the area who, mostly, boast much bigger memberships and better facilities than us.

Our team captains will tell you that it is not always easy to find enough good players for the matches so if you would like to 'try-out' for a team place the best option is to turn up at a 'club session' where it is usually possible to play against some of our experienced team members. This way you will be able to assess your tennis skills and let us know if you are available for the matches.

Social Events

Our next Social event will be a Quiz Night held on Friday 25th April at the All Saints Hall, Queen's Road Alton. At 7.30pm. Teams of 4-6 but don't worry if you are not in a team - singles will be teamed up on the night. If you would like to come please contact Judy on 01420 82289 or 0774516646 or e mail judyraynbird@aol.com by Monday 21st April.

SKITTLES EVENING

A very enjoyable time was enjoyed at the Skittles evening at the French Horn in Alton. Members and guests attended a very friendly sociable event. Before supper the Ladies beat the Gents.

Afterwards we changed to a sudden-death format which finished with an exciting duel between Gill & Stan. Stan ran out the eventual winner.

Thanks to all who attended, and Judy for organising.

Juniors Report

Do encourage your children to take advantage of the lessons that will restart on 5th April taking place every Saturday morning until August, when the holiday programme commences.

You can just turn up and play, no need to book a place.

Also please note that this year we are running the Club Junior Tournament for the Junior Cup on 19th July, at 1.00 pm, earlier in the calendar than in previous years. We have some good junior members now and it should be an exciting event. It would be great if lots of people came along to watch and encourage our juniors.

On that day there will also be a competition for the Starters Group from 10.00 to 11.30 and the Intermediate Group from 11.30 to 1.00pm, both of these will be open to members and non-members and we hope will provide a really good opportunity to practice competitive skills.

The Club is also hosting a number of junior events that Michele is running herself – see the website for more information.

Coaching Programme 2008

As our Adult Coaching Programmes were so successful last year, we have decided to run them again:

1. Adult Coaching Programme for Club members – Fridays at 13.00 – 14.00 hrs. This will run on 2nd, 9th, 16th and 23rd May and the 6th and 13th June. It will cost £30 for 6 sessions – payable in advance. Participant comments were positively glowing last year!
2. East Hampshire District Council have agreed to fund a Return to Sport Course commencing on 23rd April from 9.30 to 11.00 am each Wednesday for 7 weeks. Return to Sport Courses are designed to increase levels of participation in sports from those who haven't played for some time.

Both programmes will be run by our coach Michele Price

If you need further information on either the Junior or Adult Coaching Programmes please contact:

Sue Hubbard
01420 87709
suehubbard@108.nildram.co.uk

Wimbledon Tickets

As an LTA Affiliated club we are allocated tickets for the Wimbledon Tournament. This year we have been given the chance to buy 6 pairs of tickets for either Centre Court or Number 1 Court.

A draw for the tickets will be made at the American Tournament scheduled for Monday 5 May (Bank Holiday). All full senior members who have renewed their subscription or joined by that date, and have indicated a wish to go into the draw, will be entered. Come to the Tournament and see the draw!

The successful members will have the opportunity to buy the tickets, the first name out having the first choice of dates etc.

This is yet another reason to renew your membership on time. Not only will you benefit from the prompt renewal discount of £7 (£60 instead of £67) but you also have a chance to go and watch the best tennis players in the world

Fundraising

The purpose of this article is two-fold

- to let you know of the plans to improve the facilities at Alton Tennis Club
- to give you an opportunity to help make these plans happen

As you will have read in the Chairman's Note, exciting plans are underway to revolutionise both the playing and 'comfort' facilities at Alton Tennis Club. We have done some preliminary investigations into club-house builders and fund-raising sources. We have also talked to other clubs that have done the same. We believe that it is genuinely possible for us to gain significant funding to give us the new facilities we need. In the next few months you can expect to see a clear proposal with pictures and plans. We also aim to have, a fundraising target and to get more ideas from other people, along with a list of funds to tap, With everyone's support and involvement we'll be ready to start the campaign by the end of May.

"So, how can I help?" you are probably asking yourself.

Basically, if you have any fundraising ideas - time, skills or energy to share, please get in touch. We need any knowledge you might have of organisations to approach for funds – local or national. Just email us. Think about how you might help in the future: organising a small fundraising event or contributing some of your professional or other skills including the rolling up of sleeves! We want you all to know about the plans and to encourage others to support the Club.

Thank you - together we can make it happen!

Debbie Jones and John Hubbard
hubbardj@gotdsl.co.uk & deborah.j.jones@btopenworld.com