

CHAIRPERSONS ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Our club continues to thrive - almost too well, as we have had no option but to cap our membership numbers to ensure sufficient court time for our members.

We are blessed within the club, having a Committee who volunteer their time and significant expertise to ensure the smooth and professional running of our club. Each one has taken the lead throughout the year in various aspects of our club - the variety and complexity is impressive and frightening in equal measure.

This year I am pleased to announce that other club members have stepped up to help with running the table/box, league spread sheets, inter club tournaments, trophies, social events and of course coaching. I will not name them all in this report but I can assure you all their input was appreciated. Members who identify things to do are invaluable to a large club like ours.

To satisfy the appetite for Pickleball we have now managed to source multiple venues to offer Pickleball almost every day of the week! This is obviously a double edged sword for the organisers but we continue to refine venues and types and

standards of play. Still some work to be done but I think we are starting to get the balance right.

Membership sits around the 125 (frozen) and current fees are £15 per year.

One of our greatest assets is our SPOND booking and communication App - its initial launch was slightly problematic but an educational drive throughout the club and a large dose of patience from more computer literate committee members seems to be winning.

Club members of all standards have represented our club in various tournaments and events throughout the year - Irish Nationals, Irish Masters, Irish Open, Lisburn, lisharragh, Valley LC. All tournaments bring an opportunity not only to showcase our ever increasing Pickleball skills but also to socialise within the greater Pickleball community with old and new friends.

The highlight of the year was undoubtedly the performances at the English Open in Telford in August 2023 where Gracie and Harry Hamilton won their category with a show stopping performance. Gracie also partnered Suzanne winning silver in the Ladies Doubles. The stellar performances at this prestigious event has catapulted our clubs reputation throughout the Pickleball community.

Special congratulations also to Jonathan, David, Cathy, Suzanne, Paul, Colin, Keith, Hannah for their FLEG Holding moments throughout the year - apologies for any omissions. Also thanks to Joe and most recently Heidi for encouraging those wishing to practice their core skills.

All this success has been supported by our media reporting in both traditional and social media - big thanks to Hannah and Paul C for their sharp professional reporting. The second edition of our Pickled Words (July 2023) edition was issued - well done to all contributors.

Club Insurance remains updated and in place. Members injuries during the year were thankfully infrequent and treatable.

Our successful Outreach work continues as and when needed - 1st Ards Presbyterian, Andrews Memorial PS, Movilla School, Aurora LC, Jordanstown PGCE class.

Non Pickleball events were varied and enjoyable.- Dog outings, Marathon running, Friends of Cancer Coffee Mornings, Evie to Tanzania, Harry Football/ rugby, Gracie (netball), Annual Pickleball Party @Cloud 9, Christmas Party and Dinner.

Our Club identity was assisted by new kit orders - most welcome before Christmas - the items were well presented and reasonably priced.

At the time of writing, plans are underway to run 2 Club Tournaments to celebrate the clubs 5th Anniversary. A sub group has been set up to organise the events and gain sponsorship.

**Matt Bishop
Outgoing Chair**