

City of Derry Tennis Club: NIC 108211

Trustees' report for the year ended March 2024

Aims and constitution:

As stated in our constitution document (2021), the club exists for the advancement of amateur tennis. Specifically, we aim to promote the sport of tennis in a manner that provides equal opportunities for all in the local community. The club rents court space at two venues: Foyle College, 67 Limavady Road and Waterside Shared Village (WSV), 61 Irish Street.

Public benefit

The club's main activities and achievements during the subscription year 2023/24 are discussed below. We hereby confirm that through those activities the trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

Notable activities

This year saw a number of initiatives designed to allow easier access to tennis and embrace the benefits offered by new technologies. The club created a website (www.cityofderrytennisclub.com) providing details about how to join the club, book a court, arrange lessons etc. This has become the main point of contact for potential new players and includes a section on Frequently Asked Questions. In tandem, the club opened an on-line banking facility with PayPal to facilitate transactions (subscriptions, guest fees, lesson fees) linked through the website. In May, an on-line survey was circulated to members to canvass opinion on matters such as court availability, preference of venue (Foyle College or WSV), opportunities for social tennis, coaching needs. Results then guided committee decisions and policies.

For those players new to the club, or without regular playing partners, the club continued to set aside 'green courts' - pot-luck slots where members can enter their name without the need for pre-arranging a playing partner. These slots help new members to integrate into the wider club. The timing and number of these 'green courts' was a key topic in the survey. 'Social-tennis' evenings were added to the weekly roster and all members were free to turn up and play without any prior booking; the emphasis on mixing ages and abilities and having fun.

There were 20 junior members for the year and their development is vital to the club's future success and viability. In November, the club commenced weekly junior coaching with a trained Level 1 Tennis Ireland Coach. It was recognised that some juniors attending lessons find the progression to club membership difficult; progression requires that juniors should be capable of playing a full set i.e. able to serve, rally, keep score. To encourage this, we began match-play sessions, both singles and doubles, for juniors. Six of our junior members went on to represent the club in junior tennis tournaments throughout the North West region. The club organised and hosted a Safeguarding Children and Young People Workshop in November for our and Strabane Tennis Club's committee members and volunteers. This workshop was run by the Development Officer and the Safeguarding Lead Officer for Ulster Tennis. The trustees are very appreciative of the time and commitment invested by committee members in supervising and organising the junior development programmes. The club also ran adult coaching sessions over the summer months; there were around 12 new attendees with 18 intermediate players from the existing membership also participating in the lessons.

One of our coaches ran a number of outreach sessions at Foyle College; the sessions for different age groups ran two afternoons per week. In September, we held a well-publicised open-day event at WSV designed to promote the club and encourage members of the public to come along and give tennis a go with the option to book lessons and become a member. Later the same month, we held our first week-long, internal tournament at WSV offering a choice of

singles and doubles for multiple categories: open, senior and junior. Over 50 members took part and enjoyed fine weather throughout, culminating in finals and a prize-giving on the Saturday. Doubles pairings made up of juniors won the Ladies' A category and were runners up in the Ladies' B category.

Periodic fun events included a one-day tournament in June that raised £600 from the members for donation to Action Cancer. And Christmas was celebrated with a one-day indoor tournament and an evening party at a venue in town – complete with games, a quiz and dancing.

Achievements

In the reporting year 2023-24, and after marked growth post-pandemic, the club membership remained stable at around 110. Our club is one of the most cosmopolitan in the city with members drawn from over 15 different nationalities. The club recognises that tennis is an important means for people to improve their fitness levels, but more importantly provides a social outlet which benefits mental as well as physical health.

In an early competition, our Ladies' C team won the North West of Ireland Spring League. Our best young player enjoyed success throughout 2023 and won the Men's Singles and Doubles titles at the Cavan Senior Open in May, reaching a National Irish ranking of 13 (adults). One senior player competed in numerous tournaments around the province, progressing from C to B class events, and won the Men's Singles Over-55 years title at the County Antrim Championships in August.

Financial position

The club remains in a strong financial position and closed the year to March 2024 with £30k in the bank accounts after achieving a surplus for the reporting period. This year's surplus of £6k is somewhat inflated by members' advance payments in March of subscriptions for the new playing season. The bank balance, built up over numerous years, represents the club's only financial asset (small amounts of training equipment aside) and we continue to rent court space in the city. Billing delays meant that three months of court hire at WSV were unpaid at 31 March, but those amounts were settled in full post year-end. There were no other material creditors (or other deficits) unpaid at year end.

Governance

The club's trustees during the reporting period were: Kevin Cleary, Adrian Ford, Peter Fryer, Mark Moroney and Teresa Sweidan.

The club's committee, appointed at Annual General Meeting, meets monthly to manage affairs; since the COVID pandemic those meetings have been conducted via video link.



Teresa Sweidan, Chair



Dated