

SECRETARY'S REPORT 10 MAY 2022

Tennis is of course to be played rather than talked about, but, alas, there is no avoiding the administrative and financial side of things in a club like ours. But there are just two matters I feel deserve a mention on this occasion.

You may well be aware that the club has a rather odd relationship with Falkirk Council in the sense that the clubhouse was erected so far as I know without any assistance whatever, financial or otherwise from the Council. So we own the building, but not the ground under it; nor of course do we own the courts. But we can't complain since the club pays just £1 per annum by way of rent. What that does imply of course is that the club is hardly in a position to negotiate with the Council when it comes to the terms of the lease that lays down the conditions under which the club occupies the site. Effectively, we do "what we are told" and to be fair the Council has never caused any difficulties in my time.

The club lease has been in place for quite some time and indeed has only 13 or 17 years left to run (I can never remember which!). Over recent years the club has been successful in applying for funding from Council and other bodies, none of which involved big sums of money. We have therefore been in touch with the Council more recently about renewing the lease, just in case the length of the lease becomes any kind of issue if we are eventually able to apply for funding towards the cost of a new clubhouse structure. The Council have been very positive towards us, but the problem that emerged is that a lawyer friend of mine advised me that if we insist on having a lease extending more than 20 years there will be much higher registration costs, possibly up to £1000. The Committee has therefore taken the view that approaching funding bodies with the assurance of having an updated lease extending for 20 years will provide sufficient assurance to them that any funding they provide will not be wasted.

That new lease is in process of being formally registered by the Council and we shall be advised when that is achieved.

The other matter concerns the Club Constitution, which dates back to November 1993 no less. I must say I have no recollection of any issue whatever arising in regard to anything in the Constitution. Its important to grasp that the Constitution is purely internal to the club – it imposes nothing on the Council as our landlord. If there were anything in it that could be shown to be contradictory to the Council lease then that element in the Constitution is not valid. Nor has any of the bodies we have applied to for funding over the years ever asked to see the Constitution. I mention this because there have been suggestions made to the effect that the terms of the Constitution are a big deal to prospective funding bodies.

Nevertheless, it is an aged document and perhaps the time is ripe to revise it. With this in mind, the Committee is very grateful to club member Tony Dick who has taken the trouble to obtain a template document from the Lawn Tennis Association – in effect, what the LTA now recommends as a basis for an updated Constitution, and has drawn up a first draft the Committee can start with. Faced with the appalling prospect of grinding through this rather long document, I am delighted to be handing it over to my young successor to take forward!

Finally, let me say, I agreed to become Club Secretary some 6 years ago, because I had to admit it was easier for someone with my working background to contribute in this way than for others. It has been a pleasure to work with and for the Committee and to see the club prosper within its

unavoidable limitations. I am not intending to leave the club and am looking forward to becoming the Committee's chief critic, commenting endlessly "would never have happened in my day"