



ANNUAL REPORT 2022



**SOLIHULL ARDEN
CLUB**



Sharmans Cross Road, Solihull, West Midlands B91 1RG www.solihullarden.co.uk

President: Richard Dumbleton

Management Committee: Chairman: Alan Robinson, Vice Chairman: John O'Malley, Treasurer: Pam Telfer, Secretary: Vacant role
General Manager: Mark Carroll, Tennis/Padel: Paul Stanley, Squash: Richard Lowe, Gym: Ken James
Life Members: Mrs. Joan Erskine, Gordon Hall, Roy Clark, Jeremy Bates, Jonah Barrington, Mike Erskine, John Skerrett, Nigel Orrett.

Dear Member

Notice is hereby given that the 50th Annual General Meeting of the Solihull Arden Club will be held at the Clubhouse on Monday 27th March 2023 at 8.00 p.m. to transact the following business:

- 1 Apologies.
- 2 Approval of the previous AGM minutes (28th March 2022).
- 3 Changes to the Club Rules & Bye Laws.
- 4 Report of the Chairman.
- 5 Reports of the Treasurer.
- 6 Report of the General Manager.
- 7 Receive and adopt the accounts.
- 8 Election of the President, Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Treasurer.
- 9 Election of the Management Committee.
- 10 Any other business (At the Chairman's discretion).



NOTES

1. Elections

Club President: Richard Dumbleton

Chairman: Alan Robinson

Vice-Chairman: John O'Malley

Tennis/Padel: Paul Stanley

Squash/Racketball: Richard Lowe

Gym: Ken James

No other nominations have been received

Vacant Positions are as follows: Secretary

Members wishing to raise anything under Any Other Business must submit them by email to the Club Chairman by 22nd March 2023.

2. Subscriptions

Membership subscription rates will be unchanged for 2023/24 for at least the next 6 months.

However the Management Committee will review the situation in the Autumn.

Should the rates of inflation continue to escalate we may have to increase subscriptions to maintain solvency.

3. Constitution

No changes have been made to the Club Rule-book.

Solihull Arden Annual Chairman's Report Alan Robinson

Introduction

Dear Member. After the personal concerns of us all during the Covid pandemic and the restrictions that it placed upon businesses, 2022 was a very refreshing year for Solihull Arden Club. In 2021 we had an excellent 36% rise in membership but in 2022 we have beaten that with a further rise of 380 members to 1200 by the end of December.

That's an amazing 46% increase! Membership subscriptions are of course the Club's main source of income so this strengthens our financial position with 2022 being a year we made a substantial profit after several years of being close to or actually "in the red". Full credit to our General Manager **Mark Carroll**, for managing our marketing activity for new members so successfully, but also to

our Deputy GM, Jack Evans for so enthusiastically engaging with prospective members who visit us to see our facilities. Also during 2022 with our migration to the new (Ashbourne) membership system which has the ability for people to join online, many members simply joined that way. And of course full credit to all of our staff for helping to encourage prospective members in showing them around our facilities.

During 2022 Padel flourished as we were always confident that it would. Padel brought us a significant number of new members, plus considerable income from pay and play, but rather unexpectedly, we have seen a lot of people joining to play squash and/or racketball which is also excellent. In addition to racquet sports, Mark's drive during late 2021 to hugely improve the gym and convert the function room into a 'fitness suite' has resulted in a huge increase in 'fitness' members.

In last year's report I said "We are working on other plans to try and find funding for roofs on two of the padel courts....." plus a number of other projects which are all in our Strategic Plan. In the past we have been very successful in securing grants towards improving the club. For instance, £35,000 towards squash court 6 from England Squash, all costs for purchasing and fitting the glass doors to squash courts (approximately £1,000 each) from Sport England, all costs

**Chairman's
Report**

of replacing a large part of the roofs on the club house from Sport England, 30% of the cost of fitting LED lights into all squash courts (from the Carbon Trust). But in 2022 funds became way more difficult to secure. This was partially due to Covid as many possible sources of grants were focussing on providing funding to organisations who had significantly suffered due to the pandemic and fortunately we did not. We really are hoping that in 2023 these limitations begin to relax to enable us to be able to deliver some of the projects from the Strategic Plan.

During the last year we also formed a "Facility Development Fund Raising Group" to focus upon acquiring funding for maintenance and improvement projects. This also includes us forming a Charitable Trust for SAC which will have its own governance arrangements and identity, but is affiliated to Solihull Arden Club. This will hopefully open more doors for us in terms of raising funds for development of the club facilities.

Finally I must say sincere thanks to all members of the Management Committee for supporting Mark and his Team. Also thanks to all those members who do so much "behind the scenes" in running leagues and tournaments and also thanks to those helping to organize and supporting Social Activities at the club.



Finance Report

Pam Telfer **Treasurer**

An independent accounting company continued to manage our accounts in 2022.

For the year to 31 December 2022 the Club realised a net profit of £43,554 compared to the profit of £1,384 in the previous year.

In general, the effects of COVID lock down periods had adversely affected our membership and trading income in 2021.

In 2022 our GM **Mark Carroll** has significantly rebuilt the membership and trading income.

Considering that we received £78k in government & other grants in 2021, in real terms, our profit was increased by £117k in 2022.

This has been marginally offset by an increase of £44k in general overhead costs.

<i>The major movements in profit for 2022 were:</i>	<i>£,k</i>
Increase in membership subscriptions	95
Increase in bar contribution	34
Increase in function room contribution	7
Increase in sundry income	13
Income from sale of kitchen equipment	2
Decrease in government grants received	(73)
Increase in energy costs	(25)
Decrease in cleaning costs	12
Increase in maintenance costs	(10)
Increase in staff costs	(22)
Increase in interest paid on loans	(2)

Subscriptions

2022 saw a marked increase in membership, where subscriptions have increased by £95k.

Bar & catering contribution

In 2022 we realised a £40k profit in the bar contribution.

Contribution in 2021 was £6k.

Staff costs

Total staff costs increased by £22k.

Some of the increase is due to additions to the facilities team who manage in-house cleaning and maintenance.

In part of 2021, staff were on furlough.

Asset additions & replacement

Expenditure includes £9k for gym equipment.

Bank loans

- We repaid £16k of the government bounce back loan and paid £1k in loan interest.
- We repaid £19k of the padel loan and paid £7k in loan interest.

Cash on hand

The Club had £38k cash at bank and in hand at 31 December 2022.



GM Report 2022

Mark Carroll **General Manager**

Over the last 12 months the Solihull Arden Club has carried on developing its comprehensive pathway that cultivates and improves the facilities while creating an exceptional member experience. Successfully navigating the industry trends has allowed for continual growth throughout the whole calendar year resulting in another year of positive movement, in January 2022 we managed 124 new memberships sales which was uncharted territory for the Solihull Arden Club only to be surpassed in January 2023 where we did astronomical 132 new memberships.

Creating financial stability for the Solihull Arden Club was our key objective for 2022 and could only be achieved with recurring revenue stability and membership growth, with the cost of living and energy crisis gripping the country it's never been as difficult to achieve this, however, by changing our approach and enhancing our product we managed to thrive, increasing our membership base from 599 in August 2021 to 1300 in February 2023 #Amazing. Achieving these numbers has been from an accumulation of strong marketing promotions, outreach and awareness days within the community and a rewarding referral campaign, nevertheless, this is only half the story as retaining members is the real test of success and so far this has been our finest achievement to date. These amazing results are testament to **Pam Telfer** our Club Treasurer who has been fundamental every step of the way.

With the launch of the new open plan gym and class timetable in January 2022 our fitness offering has gone from strength to strength, having the studio classes included in our membership packages has really enhanced our product and engaged members throughout



the calendar year. The Gym has had many new additions over the last 12 months with a new Cross Trainer, Stepper, Smiths Machine, Dumbbells and Racks, Shoulder Press machine, Chest Press Machine, Lat Pulldown/Low Row machine and various plyometric pieces of equipment which in turn highlights the value of our product here at the Solihull Arden Club. Moreover, our ethos and approach regarding how quickly we react to problems really does resonate how proud we are about our facilities and how pleased we are with the service we provide, many thanks to **Ken James** our Gym Chairman for his ongoing support and help in achieving this amazing service.

Running parallel with these new additions was the launch of our very own '**Solihull Arden App**' which has made booking classes a simple as a 'touch of a button', furthermore Tennis, Padel, Squash and Racketball club nights are now all booked using this platform. This modern movement has massively helped control and manage these complimentary 'coach run' sessions that members receive as part of their package, in fact, there is something delivered by a coach and/or trainer here at The Solihull Arden club 7 days a week! Alongside the launch of the Solihull Arden App was our new website which has been fundamental with for our growth, this platform facilitated 49 new online joiners in January 2023 alone, thus demonstrating the importance of a strong digital footprint in this new modern era.

All of our sporting offerings have developed over the last 12 months with more participants than ever, Padel has been a fantastic addition and truly embraced by our members. The Padel club nights have been a hive of activity since it was launched and continued successfully throughout the winter, Tennis Club night has continued to be a huge success and pioneered the new booking system that was then used across all sports, special thanks to **Jack Evans** for his great energy and motivation when delivering both Tennis and Padel Social sessions over the last 12 months. Squash has had consistent growth throughout the year with a massive influx of players of all abilities, moreover, due to the expansion of players in both Squash and Racketball we created an addition club night to accommodate demand which has also been a huge success. I would like to thank both **Paul Stanley** and **Richard Lowe** for their ongoing passion and enthusiasm for their respected sports, real ambassadors of the club and their sporting disciplines.

I would like to thank everyone on the Management Committee and the Club President for their amazing support, vision and openness to embrace the positive changes made by the club over the last 12 months. In particular I would like to thank **Alan Robinson** the Club chairman for his constant and ongoing dedication to the Solihull Arden Club, all of our growth and developments would not have been possible without his dedicated support, direction and belief. Finally I would like to thank the Club president **Richard Dumbleton** for all of his time and commitment, his passion resonates throughout the club and personifies what the Solihull Arden Club is all about.

Squash & Racketball

Richard Lowe **Squash & Racketball Chairman**

What a difference a year makes!

It was only this time last year – February 2022 – that all Covid restrictions and rules were scrapped.

And what a year it has been! The Club has been transformed in that time with Mark and Jack bringing in hundreds of new members across all groups with new squash and racketball members as part of the clubs' rebirth. Lots of new faces – lots of enthusiasm and everyone so glad to get back to normal. Book a court, turn up, play, have some fun. A couple of beers. Sounds simple but how we've missed it all.

We will do everything we can to make up for lost time and make 2023 the best ever. New glass back courts, new floors, court maintenance programme back to normal. Squash and Racketball tournaments and upgrading all our facilities. New Club Nights and new junior programme, New schools initiatives.

We are making a name for ourselves in the squash community and there are no limits to what we can do. The Club looks great, feels great and everyone loves it.

Team Squash

Just to reference last year's Annual Report we did indeed go on to win the Warwickshire Title again, making it 3 years in a row.

First Team games are on a Monday night and we always have at least 30-40 members watching some of the best players in the Midlands including **Chris Ryder** and Captain **Simon Herbert** (world number 80) and next season will be even better with more world classed players lined up. Monday nights just keep getting better with more world classed players lined up.

Our second and third teams have both had competitive seasons and are doing well – thanks to Team Captains **Tony Hannington** and **Tom Harris!**

Due to demand from Club Members we also started a 4th team and they are looking to win their division title thanks to their captain, **Lou Van Talligan**. With 11 our new members and players keen to play team squash we will start up a 5th team if we need to.

Team Racketball

It has been an interesting year for the Racketball Team. **Luke Symes**, our regular number one player for the last 3 years left in November to go travelling in Australia for a year. But before taking off he ensured his name was sketched on the club champions board for a 3rd time beating Justyn Claydon in a keenly contested final.

Thankfully **Tom Hudson**, **Ben Whetstone** and **Tom Harris** have been regulars and have been extremely fortunate that **James Prenderville** has seen the fitness benefits of becoming Team No 1.

The enthusiasm of these guys has been immense and from occasional appearances from **Luke Friend** my participation has not been required and we are sitting at the top of division 2 with 2 matches left. I am confident that we will win the league and by playing in Division 1 next winter which will enable us to form a 2nd team to play in division 2.

Thank you to the guys, it is great to see a young, enthusiastic and vibrant racketball team representing Solihull Arden.

Gordon Symes – Racketball Team Captain.

Ladies Team Squash

There is a healthy Ladies section at the club with members enjoying being coached as well as them coaching others. There are female members of all ages playing in the leagues and a lively participation in Club Nights. We have ladies representing the club in team matches, in the Warwickshire Open and ladies categories as well in junior and county teams.

The Ladies Team were promoted into the first division and although it seemed a daunting prospect looking at the strength of some of the other teams, we had a very good season and finished third, A new



addition to the team is Crystal who has bolstered the strength and depth of the team.

We have a brilliant team ethos with lots of support for each other and a great camaraderie.

Jane Armstrong – Ladies Team Captain.

Chairman’s Summary

I would like to thank all the club members who play and support our teams and who enjoy team squash and racketball. They all play at a very high level and enhance the reputation of the club throughout the Midlands squash and racketball community.

I would also like to say a massive thank you to the members who support the first team through their sponsorship and financial backing to help us get one of the best squads in the Midlands – our main sponsors, Pete and **Paul Olds** of Bickford Building Services, **Nigel Orrett, Ian Thurman, Paul Warmington, Darren McNeil** and **Dave Fennell**.

Thank you to **Mark Carroll** and **Jack Evans** for your support on match nights – we really appreciate it for court bookings, match balls, adminand help towards team suppers.

Thank you also to **Brett Taylor** for his coaching skills and his racquet stringing expertise.

Club championships for squash and racketball are back up and running and have been well supported and well done to all members who competed and congratulations to all the winners and runners up.

Thank you to **Tim Forsyth** and **Tim Woodfield** for all you organising skills in running the tournaments.

Club Championships

The club championships for squash were very well supported and contested and well done to all members who completed and congratulations to the winners and runners up.

Thanks to **Tim Forsyth** for organising and running it all.

Club Nights

Like everywhere else in the club, Club Nights are back and even more popular than ever. So busy that you need to book in to make sure you can play – so big are the number of members who want to play.

Squash Club Nights are **Wednesdays and Sundays 6pm to 8pm**

Racketball has its own **Club Night every Friday 6pm to 8pm**

All nights are coach led and can I say a big thank you to **Brett Taylor** and **James Averill** for their time and dedication in making sure all members are happy.

Squash and Racketball Courts

Now we are back to some sort of normality 2023 will see us continue to improve and upgrade the quality of our squash courts to make sure we provide members with top quality facilities.

Annual Court Maintenance is back on track and will be done during the summer – July 2023.

We should be in a position to install the two new glass-back walls to Courts 1 and 4 and to replace the floors on Courts 2 & 5 which are nearing the end of life.

We will continue with our 5 year develop plans with year on year improvements to all courts and viewing galleries – upstairs has been improved greatly with the removal of the platforms and new carpets – in line with the club’s income and new membership programmes.

Thank you

Finally thank you to our members who give their time and efforts in organising competitions, tournaments, leagues etc – namely **Tim Forsyth, Steve Morton, Tim Woodfield, Justyn Claydon, Gorgon Symes** and of course all our squash and racketball team captains and team players.....we cannot thank you enough – **Many Many Thanks**.

British Junior Open – 4th to 7th January 2023

With all of the previous restrictions lifted we again co-hosted the BJO with Birmingham University, Edgbaston Priory and West Warwicks.

Some of the best juniors from all over the world came to the club and gave us four days of some fantastic squash and the players, parents and spectators made every day special and packed out the club. The atmosphere and excitement with such a busy club was great to experience. We also had the privilege of hosting the entire national Egyptian squad who trained here for days before the start of the tournament.

British Open Squash Tournament April 9th to 16th

If you don’t already know the **British Open** is coming to Birmingham in April to be hosted at Edgbaston Priory and the all glass court at the Birmingham Rep Theatre. Another fantastic plus for the Midlands and Birmingham and a great opportunity to see all the world’s top players in action.

England Squash have asked us to host and organise a graded squash tournament to run along-side the Open and Chris Ryder is planning this and will give members the chance to see some top players in action at the club.

Junior Squash

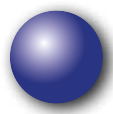
We have had a fantastic year in the junior squash set-up

We are now at a total of 95 juniors in our weekly programme, which puts us amongst the largest squash programme. The Warwickshire Squash Stars starter pack, developed during lockdown has been responsible for allowing 41 new juniors to try the game for 4 weeks while receiving a racquet, t-shirt, ball and safety goggles for just £30,

We have also just finished our first year of working with Sharmans Cross School, delivering 6 weeks of squash at the club to 330 children with the help from **Brett Taylor, John Shears & Jodie Hodgkins**. Over 10% of these children have signed up for more squash at the club.


A significant number of club juniors have taken their first steps into the national rankings set up joining several elite players. 7 of our juniors took part in the British Junior Open in January, which is a huge event hosting 700 juniors from over 50 countries that we are grateful to be a part-host of again after a 3 year hiatus. We are looking to run our own junior sanctioned event in June and a week-long summer camp in early August, which promised to be a fun filled week.

More juniors than ever are helping out with coaching, a legacy from Tom Watkins input at the club. Notably **James Averill** (Monday coaching and Junior Club Night) and **Katie Brown** (Saturday coaching) are developing their skills and proving to be reliable and capable coaches. Also many thanks to **Libby Blond** and **Emma Keeley** who have volunteered their



2022 Racketball Championships Results

Category	Club Champion	Runner Up
HCAP Plate Winner	Andy Prendeville	Richard Friend
Open Plate Winner	Pete Kingston	Adam Guy
Ladies Open Winner	Rosie Kirsch	Michelle Courtney
55 & Over Winner	Pete Kingston	Charlie Mockble
Handicap Winner	Thomas Hudson	Tom Harris
Open Winner	Luke Symes	Justyn Claydon



tim on Saturday mornings.

Brett Taylor has been a welcome addition to the coaching team and has quickly become involved in a large number of activities. Many of you will know him from Club Nights, which have become more successful than at any time during my tenure. We are moving to booking onto club nights via the club's app.

Professional Players

We are glad to have such a healthy relationship with many local professional players who are often found training at the club during the daytime. On several occasions pro players have been more than happy to provide a short exhibition for visiting schools and help out here-and-there with the junior programme. We even managed to tick off a 100th birthday wish for Bob Paddock, our oldest racket-baller, by two top 50 players playing an exhibition for him Nathan Lake and George Parker.

We are looking at ways to integrate the pros more into the club environment and provide inspiration to us all!

Adult Squash and Teams

Once again, the reason why our squash section continues to be successful, despite declining numbers nationally, is the strong sense of community we embrace at the club. The mini-squash court in Touchwood shopping centre was a fantastic example of that with a large number of volunteers from the club turning up to assist with playing squash with members of the public and selling the virtues of our club. The club signed up 30 new members on the back of that project!

Chris Ryder – **Head Squash Coach**

Tennis & Padel Report

Paul Stanley **Tennis & Padel Chairman**

I finished last year's report, 2021, with the sentence.

"All in all it was a very good year for tennis, now joined by padel too. The club is buzzing I am confident our Club is in good shape for the future."

Well, 2022 has built on the very solid foundations we laid down during the covid years. The decision to invest a significant sum in our 3 padel courts at a time when sports clubs were questioning their future has proved to be a major turning point in the whole club's wellbeing. As was the decision by our general Manager Mark to have an inclusive rackets membership category. Both of the above coupled with several other key investments has resulted in booming membership including 130 new members in January alone.

I hope you all sense that the club is in a very good place and well set for another period of growth as long as we maintain a welcoming and friendly culture to all members new and old.

So highlights of Tennis.

Team Tennis

We had 8 men's teams and 5 ladies teams in the summer league and 6 of those teams got promotion in 2022. Well done to all the team captains and everyone who represented the club. A special mention to **Chris Foulkes** who runs the men's practice sessions on a Thursday that are really well supported. If you are good enough to play team tennis and want to join please contact Chris. We also need more ladies team players so if you would like to join us just contact me and I will pass onto the ladies captains.

Social Tennis

Our club nights are still a great way to have regular tennis. Monday and Wednesday 6.00 to 10.00. Many thanks **Jack Evans** who has done a great job picking up where Seb left off coordinating the sessions

Chris Cronin is keeping our Thursday morning 10.00 to 12.00 sessions vibrant and welcoming. We are just waiting to develop our over 80's team into world beaters. I'm sure you will be aware that tennis was identified as being the best all round activity for increasing longevity. It's the combination of activity and social interaction.

If you would like to join in either just contact Jack or Chris and they will be happy to fit you into the sessions.

Club Championship

We ran it again over June to Sept with the finals on the 1st Sunday of September and I would say numbers entering were good but it would be great to get more of our new members taking part this year. The entry sheets will be going up in May again.

The highlights are always the singles finals and we have to find someone to challenge our multiple winner Rich Westman, who won again in 2022. At least it will be easier for the sign writer when we eventually get round to updating the winners boards. It was also a shame we didn't hold a ladies final this year due to lack of interest. So lets see a few more ladies competing this year please.

Padel

Has helped bring in significant numbers of new members and they are also a solid stream of pay and play revenue from non-members. The box leagues have worked really well and we now have 90 members in 9 divisions playing regularly.

Padel really is an easy game to play so if you haven't tried why not book in on our social sessions, Thursday 6.00 to 8.00 and Saturday 3.00 to 5.00 and we can show you how to play and maybe you might want to join the league, which David Currie coordinates.

Head Coach Alex was selected by the LTA to attend the national 10&U performance programme for coaches who are making an impact with young players on a regional and national level, as such Solihull Arden is now a recognised as a 10&U pathway venue in the midlands being recognised for producing promising junior players.

Coaching

Head Coach **Alex** was selected by the LTA to attend the national 10&U performance programme for coaches who are making an impact with young players on a regional and national level, as such Solihull Arden is now a recognised as a 10&U pathway venue in the midlands being recognised for producing promising junior players.

Our juniors had success in the Warwickshire Winter and Summer leagues in 2022, with 4 winning junior teams in the summer (8's, 9's, 12's Boys, 18's Girls) and 2 winning junior teams in the winter (12's Boys and 16's Boys).

Not only were we invited but we went onto win Rothesay Challenge at The Priory in the 9&U thanks to **Hollie Ruck, Jack Brindley, Jacob Askey** and **Summer Nicol**. Junior player **Hollie Ruck** also won the 9&U county championships a fantastic achievement, to go with her 8&U trophy a year previous.

Alex and the team provide a full program of team and individual coaching to help all abilities and age groups. Just speak with Alex if you would like to join any of them.

