

Autumn 2026

This year has been a wonderfully eventful and rewarding one for our club. After 18 years of outstanding leadership from Rob, Alastair stepped up with great courage and enthusiasm to take the reins, ready to embrace both the opportunities and challenges ahead.

Barely three weeks into January, we received notice that the courts would be closing the following week until some vague "*date in April.*" We had long been lobbying the local Council for much-needed court maintenance, so the news was welcome – but the very short notice meant some swift action was needed to avoid a complete shutdown. Thanks to some quick thinking and even exploring alternative lighting options, we worked with the Council to adjust the maintenance schedule, keeping some courts open throughout much of the winter. While outsiders may assume tennis is only played in July at Wimbledon, our club proudly offers daytime courts and coaching all year round, with two floodlit courts available in the evenings.



The rest of the winter played on with our new Events Officers - Lyn and Shirley, who brought a fresh wave of social ideas – starting with a lively 10-pin bowling evening. We also celebrated Rob receiving the richly deserved Lawn Tennis Association's Cathie Sabin Volunteer of the Year Award, in recognition of his inspirational passion and achievements during his time as Chair.

After months of digging, root removal, resurfacing, and spraying over filled cracks, our courts have been transformed from their 1970s muted red and green into vibrant, high-contrast 21st-century blue and green – so bright you almost need sunglasses! What better way to celebrate than with our annual Free Tennis For All open day? We did, of course, have to wait an extra week for the paint to dry.

The rest of the season flowed smoothly, with around 150 members making the most of the fantastic new courts and



exceptionally good weather – albeit punctuated by five heat waves!

Administration is increasingly moving online: court bookings and access came first, followed by automatic membership renewals (though we still received one cheque this year!). Our committee still meets face-to-face regularly, but most of our organisation now happens via WhatsApp. This year, we trialled online voting for the AGM, which worked well. Demand for online video streaming is probably still limited, but online scheduling for the Men's Singles and Doubles tournament proved a great success.

Our regular schedule is more than enough for many, but for those with extra energy, there's plenty more: the club tournament and league matches for the competitive spirits; club day and night sessions four times a week for the sociably inclined (with a competitive streak); thirteen training sessions a week for those determined to raise their game; and holiday camps and match play for children aged 2–17 – for the future Wimbledon champions (and parents keen to sit courtside in the players' box!).

And for those who want even more, we offered free doubles tactics coaching, tennis and tea for ladies, coaching for women from the local mosque, regular free court use for around 700 Blessed George Napier (BGN) school students, and social tennis for members' family and friends. It has been a successful, enjoyable, and hugely productive year. Looking ahead, Shirley and Lyn are already coordinating an exciting autumn programme including Banbury pub visits and the much-anticipated Christmas Party. Regrettably, the October Stowe Ramble was Storm *Boleo'd out* and is rescheduled for next May.

Competitions

Our club enters summer and winter teams into both the Banbury Tennis League and the Oxfordshire Dunlop League.

Match Secretary Gary Jackson writes: this is the summary of both the
Oxfordshire Winter & Summer Leagues 2026

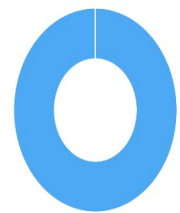


Mens A Winter Premier Division

A solid performance from Mens A finishing eighth, well clear of any relegation concerns. Darren and Elliott both played 8 matches and

Proposal of Membership Fees for 2027/28

Option	Votes
☒ For	100% 18
☐ Against	0% 0
☐ Abstain	0% 0





Matt 6, which made up the core of the team. Both Darren and Matt recording good winning percentages.

This team continues to set the example of the importance of making yourself available to play matches; with a small squad this team continues to impress. I'm not sure as a club we appreciate how fortunate we are to have such committed top players.

Ladies A Division 1

Sadly, it's not going so well for the ladies. I'm afraid Fiona and Caroline can only do so much, and this year was the tipping point. Unfortunately, a lack of ladies able to compete at this level has been steadily declining each year for a while now. The ladies defaulted two matches and finished with the wooden spoon.



We have bravely entered a ladies team into Div. 2 this winter, only time will tell if that was a wise move.

Mens A Summer Div. 1 (no premier)

Yet again another very solid showing from our top male

players. A third-place finish with a squad of 6 players is testament to the commitment of the players.

I (Gary) played all 7, Darren 6, Matt and Elliott 5 each. We only needed to pull a player up from the B team once. Darren had an excellent win ratio of won 9 lost 3, which given the standard of opposition is truly impressive. Darren is a real success story for Banbury Tennis Club, having come through the Club as a junior, and barely misses a match these days.

Mens B Div. 8 PROMOTION!!!

For me the highlight of the season was witnessing the B team put a run together for promotion.

An excellent second place finish means the B team will be playing Div. 7 next season. The difference from previous seasons was quite simply improved



availability. Each match was filled with players from the B team squad, not a single C team player needed to be called upon.

Josh played 5 matches, Corentin 5, Rob 5, Dillon 4 and Rod 4. Rob seems to have galvanised this team and I suspect a good run in Div. 7 next season will be on the cards.

Mens C Div. 12

The C team had a tough season but did at least manage to win one match. Finishing second bottom which probably means it's Div. 13 next season. You can't be relegated from Div. 13 at least.

Ladies A Div. 4

The ladies failed to play enough matches, so the team was withdrawn during the season.

We will have to decide about the future of this team given the number of ladies that we have that can play at this level. Having said that Division 5 probably isn't that strong. Hopefully we will gain some strong ladies at some point, we remain hopeful.

Ladies B Division 10

PROMOTION!!!

This was a real pleasant surprise for me. With a spectacular won 5 lost 1.



Ruth yet again showing age is no barrier with an excellent 6 matches played (and a winning record), Shirley 5, Penny 4, Sunny 4. Great captaincy, Shirley. Enjoy Div. 9 next season.

Mixed A Div. 2

We have secured safety in Div.2 with an outside chance of promotion still in play. Although we are happy in Div. 2 given the constant battle Caroline faces in fielding a team for each match, especially if Matt decides to go on holiday.

With just three ladies and a group of men who aren't always massively keen to play mixed, Caroline continues to perform miracles in keeping this team afloat.

Mixed B

Sadly, this team has now folded.



Mixed C Div. 9

With one match remaining the C team is placed in sixth with a very respectable won 3 and lost 3 record. Penny has shared the matches around and eight players have represented the club.

Banbury Tennis Leagues

Former Match Secretary Rod Haddrell writes: **Banbury Tennis Leagues 2026**



It has been a challenging year for our 2 summer league teams and our single winter floodlit league team.

Winter League

The Floodlit team “competed” in the top division, having been gifted the poisoned chalice of promotion by Byfield, who didn’t take up their “prize”!

We gratefully accepted the challenge and I’m not alone in having enjoyed playing stronger teams. However, we inevitably found the competition too strong and have come straight back down to play Div 2, starting last September.

Summer League

Our summer A and B teams spent the entire campaign staring at relegation, the A team from Div 2 and the B team from Div 4. Whereas the B team ultimately fell just short in the last few matches and now slip into Div 5, the A team pulled off a truly heroic escape and will play Div 2 again next summer.

With just 2 games remaining, we trailed our nearest rival in the table by 41 pts to 22. However, this year, we were indeed fortunate to be able to call upon 3 new players: Sarah, Nicholas and Karlo, who together with all 3 “Hunter boys” (Elliot, Leo and Blake) turned in some brilliant performances to avoid the drop by a single rubber!

What’s more, as tennis lovers know so well, the match is only over when it’s over – and, in the last rubber of the last match, Blake and Nicholas battled back from 4-4 (0-40) to take the set, meaning we survived by a single league point.



Club Tournament



Due to differing competitors' availabilities, we did not hold a specific Finals Day this year. However, the tournament itself progressed very well, finishing as the evening light begins to fade.

On schedule, the Men's doubles and the Men's singles finals both took place on Sunday 6th September - the first on our newly painted courts. Just as the professional men's game is dominated by 2 players, so the BLTC tournaments in recent years have been a battle between Elliot and Matt. This year Matt avenged last year's defeat and took both finals.

In the doubles, Matt and the youngest Hunter, Blake, took the title in a fitting finale that went to a deciding set against the 2 elder brothers, Elliot and Leo.

The singles were then centre stage for two of the doubles finalists and, although Elliot took the 2nd set to a tie break, the twice BLTC champion Matt prevailed to regain the title that Elliot had taken from him last year.

The mixed doubles produced a remarkably similar story - slightly delayed until the clocks went back but, nonetheless, hotly contested.



It was a repeat contest of last year with Jenny & Elliot again challenging reigning champions, Caroline & Matt. The previous result was 6-3, 6-4. This match started with a scorching set that evolved into a very close opening tie break. After some great tennis all round - and, despite the pressure, a lot of fun - eventually Caroline & Matt prevailed again: 7-6, 6-4. Congratulations to them both for having

their names engraved for the second time on the Rob Gray Trophy.

It's great to see that, after a 10-year period where there were no club finals (from 2013 to 2023), we now continue to celebrate the best players at our club.

Editor's comment: It's not only the finalists that need congratulations. These competitions would not have been possible without the tenacious supervision and inspiration of Match Secretary Rod. Regrettably, Rod has relinquished his committee position after 5 years' inspirational leadership.



Membership News

Membership Secretary Wallace Farley writes:



The 2026/27 season has been a very positive year for Banbury Lawn Tennis Club. Having the courts refurbished and re-painted resulted in a good upgrade to the facilities available; and a marked improvement in the tennis experience on offer. A big thank you to those who oversaw the process, ensuring a minimal interruption to court availability.

During maintenance, it was a very pleasant experience to have club nights played on Saturday and Sunday afternoons in January and February. The winter sunshine was a welcome contrast to the dark, cold evenings.

There has been a steady increase in new players joining our club across all age ranges - from high calibre experienced players to improvers and those new to tennis. The excellent coaching programme provided by Rosie Clark and her team has been much appreciated, resulting in a regular flow of learners and improvers who become fully fledged and competent club members.

I would encourage everyone to take a look at all the coaching opportunities on offer. Whatever level you are, just a few hours coaching each week can greatly improve and develop your game.

The initiative of trialling free group coaching on club nights was very well received. Hopefully, this will be built on next season.

The social club sessions continue as normal over the Winter: Tuesdays and Fridays 6:30 to 9pm for all adult members and played in Juniors; plus Tuesdays 1:30 to 4pm (adults only); and Fridays 10am to 12 pm for Seniors.

It has been good to see an increase in ladies joining this season. Many thanks to Lyn, Penny and Shirley for their efforts here.





I would like to close by acknowledging and thanking Rod Haddrell on behalf of the membership for his sterling and patient work as Match Secretary over the last five years and, in particular, for re-instating the annual Club Championships.

Wishing you all plenty of good tennis for the remainder of the season.

Courts and Costs

We're homeless on 29th February 2029, when our 21-year lease expires. Actually, the astute of you will have spotted that 2029 is not a leap year – so let's say homeless *after* 28th February 2029.

We've been discussing with Banbury Town Council (BTC) the options for an earlier lease renewal but, after some 3 years, we have not progressed enough. Our initial aim was to invest in LED floodlights but we are reluctant to invest if the lease would not be renewed. One discussion bi-product was that BTC finally realised that court maintenance was their responsibility; hence, the resurfaced and re-sprayed courts this year. However, better lighting remains unresolved.

We've been discussing adding a padel court or two. Unfortunately, 2 padel courts don't fit onto one tennis court. BTC has also been evaluating wider facility development and had approached the LTA for some roof covering for Courts 1-4. The LTA doesn't seem too keen on providing anything more than technical (rather than financial) assistance. Anybody remember their local indoor project a few years ago?



The current situation is that the internal BTC works and finance committees are seeking approval for the next step: to work with their colleagues at Cherwell District Council to engage consultants, to undertake a review of Horton View facilities development.

In summary, it's slow progress and we'll keep you updated. Until we can confirm that we've retained long-term use of Courts 5&6, at least, or unless BTC are persuaded to replace the current lights, further upgrades are in abeyance.



Coaching

Head Coach Rosie Clark writes:



Thank you to those who joined us for another successful year across all aspects of the Coaching Programme. We were delighted to welcome James to the Coaching Team. He has thoroughly enjoyed getting to know and working with the many players across our coaching sessions.

OFSTED Registration We were pleased to achieve OFSTED registration for Banbury Tennis Club Holiday Camps. This has made Holiday Camps more accessible (and profitable for our club), with families benefitting from the use of Tax-Free Childcare and Universal Credit.

LTA Youth Match Plays We successfully hosted six LTA Youth Match Play tournaments over the past year. While this volume was slightly lower than usual due to the court repainting schedule, these events remain highly popular and offer our players invaluable competitive experience against a diverse range of external opponents.



Congratulations to the Banbury Tennis Club Juniors who won events:

Albert C, Eric S

Inaugural Club Night Coaching Club Night coaching sessions took place for members over the Summer, proving extremely popular. Many a tactical or technical tweak was made as Coach Mike delved into doubles.

Coaches In the words of Bill Gates: *"Everyone needs a coach. It doesn't matter whether you're a basketball player, a tennis player, a gymnast or a bridge player."*

Our Lead Coaches at the Club are shown below. Please visit <https://rosieclarktenniscoaching.co.uk/our-team/> to view all coaches.



Banbury Lawn
Tennis Club

Mike McDonnell

Mike has been coaching for almost 20 years at national, county, and recreational level. Previously based in Leeds, he's worked at indoor centres and represented his university at national level.

In his spare time, Mike likes to travel, watch movies, and keep active.



Toby Clark

Hugely popular with our juniors in particular, Toby has been part of the team for over 10 years. He is known for his enthusiasm and inventiveness on the court!

Toby has a Masters in War Studies and writes for several magazines.

When not coaching Toby is most likely to be watching the polo!



James Mumford

James made the jump from accounting to tennis coaching just over two years ago. As a Junior, James trained at the renowned Sutton Tennis Academy.

In his spare time, James enjoys watching sport, reading, playing the piano and walking in the Lake District.



Nicki Woodward

Nicki is a qualified primary teacher with over twenty years experience and has taught both Key Stage 1 and 2. She has taught in both the private and state sectors and enjoys sharing her enthusiasm for tennis through coaching.

Nicki enjoys playing tennis, skiing and hill walking.





Coaching Programme



**Banbury Lawn
Tennis Club**



ROSIE CLARK
TENNIS COACHING - PLAY YOUR GAME

BANBURY TENNIS CLUB

Coaching Programme September - December 2026

Mondays

4:45-5:45PM Red Beginners/Improvers (born 2019-2022)
6:15-7:15PM Adult Improvers (adults & 16+)
7:15-8:15PM Adult Advanced Improvers (adults & 16+)

Wednesdays

5-6PM Orange Beginners/Improvers (born 2017-2018)
6-7PM Junior Beginners (born 2016 or earlier)

Thursdays

9:30-10:30AM Cardio Tennis (adults & 16+)
7:45-8:45PM Adult Beginners (adults & 16+)

Saturdays

9-10AM Red Beginners/Improvers (born 2019-2022)
9-10AM Junior Beginners (born 2016 or earlier)
10-11AM Orange Beginners/Improvers (born 2017-2018)
10-11AM Junior Improvers (born 2016 or earlier)
11-11:45AM Tots (born 2022-2024)
11AM-12PM Junior Advanced Improvers (born 2013 or earlier)

ALL EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED




SCAN ME



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Seniors Tennis

The average club member age is nearer 50 than 40. Considering the number of children you see using the courts, not surprisingly, there are quite a lot of our Seniors (65+) who play all year around. They make the most of Tuesday Club Afternoons, from 1.30pm, and Friday mornings for a couple of hours from 10am.

Tennis offers older adults a fun, low-impact way to stay fit, sharp, and social. Regular play helps improve balance, coordination, and cardiovascular health, while the mental





focus required keeps the mind active. Even with a few aches or limited mobility, seniors can enjoy doubles play at a comfortable pace – come and join us! Plus, we offer discounted annual membership fees for our senior players.

Christmas Party

What better way to finish another great tennis year than another great Christmas tennis social. Following on from last year's very successful event, Shirley & Lyn are arranging a repeat bash at Ye Olde Reine Deer. Slots will disappear quickly so grab one whilst you can!

