



Banbury Lawn Tennis Club

Tournament - Finals!



Sunday 22nd September 2024

Yesterday was the culmination of our club's summer tournaments with Finals scheduled to take place across all the events (singles, doubles and mixed, plus plate events).

Match Secretary Rod Haddrell writes: This summer we have again run our club's tournaments that we re-introduced last year.



The number of entries has increased across all 4 events (Men's and Ladies' singles, Men's and Mixed doubles) and we went with a great suggestion from the membership to run the Mixed and Ladies singles with an initial round-robin format.

Matches have been played steadily throughout the last 3 months and "the seeding committee" can again be pleased that results have progressed generally to forecast, with a couple of surprises that spiced things up.

As was to be expected with the summer weather this year, our Finals Day also fell victim to some serious rain – actually an Amber Rain Warning with many resultant flash floods and disruption in the locality. It meant that the evening Ladies' Singles (Pia Ramirez v. Megan Gilkes) and the afternoon Men's Plate

event (Corentin Raffailac v. Adrian Cecchotto) have been rescheduled.

We were, however, treated to an excellent Men's Singles final. The bookies favoured the defending champion - Matt Dale - who eventually came through to retain his title. However, Dom Williams put up a superb fight proving that his run to the Final was no fluke. In a match of real quality, hard hitting and great all court play, Dom actually led 4-1 in the 2nd set but was eventually defeated 6-2, 6-4. Congratulations to both players for battling through to the Final and especially to Matt for again prevailing as Men's Singles Champion.



Earlier Matt Dale and Caro Thom had confirmed their place in next Sunday's Mixed Doubles final (1.30pm 29th September), in a repeat of last year's contest, against Elliot Hunter and Jenny Spiers. Like Matt, Elliot will also feature in 2 club finals as he and his partner Darren Simpson will take on Adrian Cecchotto and Dillon Quaedvlieg in the Men's Doubles.

More photos and results will appear soon on our FaceBook page.

A big thank you to all of our competitors for making this year's Tournament such a great success yet again and, of course, congratulations to Rod for organising a most enjoyable and efficient event.



Membership News

Membership Secretary Wallace Farley writes: The current year of membership is reasonably consistent with the previous two, with members coming and going at a similar rate, predominantly due to educational and employment reasons. Our current paid up membership stands at 165, evenly split between Adults and Juniors.



As we go into the Autumn/Winter, regular coaching and playing sessions continue for all ages. There are also Winter League matches for the really hardy. The social club slots for Adults and Seniors on Tuesdays and Fridays remain unchanged: Adults 6:30 to 9pm both days (floodlit), Seniors & Adults 1:30 to 4pm Tuesdays.

Many Thanks to Lyn Shields and Nigel Demery for their reliable and erstwhile organisational skills in keeping these sessions on the road. Also to those called to stand in when required. In the Summer we had a very successful open day, with over 100 attendees, to promote the club and recruit new members. I would encourage you all to spread the word of the benefits of playing tennis to family and friends, in particular at Banbury Lawn Tennis Club.

Courts, Costs and Club House

Most of us have noticed that all of our court surfaces are far from perfect. Courts generally need resurfacing every 10 years to keep them in good condition. Basically, annual washing is insufficient and they all now need resurfacing, which will cost around £70k. Our total finances amount to less than half that. Additionally, the old halogen lighting is needing continual expensive servicing and has become unreliable. LED replacements are in the region of 10k. The club house is on its last legs.



Although your committee has initiated a "sinking fund" to finance future expenditure there is insufficient money available to fund resurfacing etc. Why have we, as a club, reached this position?

Consulting the lease and past documents, it's clear that – back when Cherwell District Council was the Landlord – they passed the courts in good condition to

Banbury Town Council (BTC), who then leased them to us, the Club via the Trustees, for 21 years. That was 16 years ago and it expires at the end of February 2029. There is a very clear term in the Lease that says that the Landlord (BTC) is responsible to keep the courts in good and substantial repair and condition. We have advised BTC that we think it is time they lived up to their obligations. Time will tell....

Club House. All Members have access to the club house whenever playing. If you don't know the access code, ask any club official, club night organisers, team captains or a coach



The club house has:

- A first aid bag hung up on the left side and the Accident Book is in the far left corner.
- A socialising area with rest and refuge from weather. There's a kettle and fridge too.
- Display boards with varied information including Safeguarding, tournaments and

coaching.

- Club Night balls (good former match balls) are stored in 2nd storage box on right.
- Net measures by the door if not hung on court fencing.

Please always tidy up/wash up before you leave and recycle in the nearby recreation park bins. Now that winter is approaching, to prevent freezing and flooding, please turn off the water stopcock below the sink.

Finally please remember, if you're the last one to leave, to lock the club house properly every time – ensure the latch is fully across to the right and the door does not open. Ask if you're not sure!

Toilets.

Separate gender facilities are in the Pavilion behind the club house. Officials, club session organisers, captains & coaches have access to the key safe in the club house.



Seniors Tennis

We have a couple of dozen seniors (>65 years young), including a handful of octogenarians, who play regularly twice a week on Tuesdays and Fridays – all year round! We are looking for fresh talent to join us and keep us on our toes (literally). The Tuesday session is actually a Club afternoon session and any adult member is welcome to join us.

You'll find that our style is not the hard-hitting, fast-paced play of Djokovic and his ilk. Nonetheless, I think you'll find the accuracy and guile may give you a run around. Please come and have some fun whilst keeping fit! Also, if you know of any seniors sitting at home maybe wasting away then I promise we'll revive their vigour – ask them along, too.



Competitions



Match Secretary Gary Jackson writes: **Oxfordshire Summer League 2024**

Mens A

After securing promotion back to Div 1 the A team has secured top flight play for another season with one match remaining. The first season after promotion is always key and now hopefully the A team can consolidate Div 1 status for many years, with a relatively young squad with just one exception.

The core of the team featured Matt, Darren, Elliot and myself. Leo will hopefully be back in the fold soon after recovery from a back issue. Just four **dedicated** players proved to be sufficient.

Mens B

Sadly, another relegation for the B team beckons after deductions of 9 points. The key moment being a default to Wychwoods away of an 8 – 0 walkover, which also results in an eight point deduction.

It's worth noting that nobody was prepared to step up to be captain, so reluctantly the Chairman had to take on captaincy. It's a sad state of affairs

given that the entire season consists of a meagre seven matches. But probably gives a good example of the general apathy in the B team squad, and also explains the steady decline down the tables from Div. 1 to Div. 8

Mens C

Another relegation here but at least this was because we aren't strong enough, as opposed to a lack of commitment.



We only had one pair for one match, but apart from that we can rely on John and Alastair to make themselves available. The number of matches these two players have played for Banbury must be in the hundreds, they are both a massive credit to Banbury Tennis Club. Hopefully they can win a match in Div. 11 next season.

Also worth noting the inclusion of some new names in the team that I'm not familiar with, which is good to see.

Ladies A

In a very tight Div. 3 the ladies are playing well and fighting for promotion.

Two of the leading players Fiona and Charlotte seem to be playing as well as ever. Fiona has won all of her matches which is phenomenal for somebody of her experience. I can testify personally that her will to win has not diminished, despite playing competitive tennis for quite a few years. The return of leading player Kelly has also helped matters.

Ladies B

Div. 9 has proven to be another tight affair, but I'm pleased to report the ladies fended off relegation by one point.

Shirley was fortunate to have a squad of players that want to play tennis and make themselves available. Shirley played 6/8 matches, Ruth 7/8, Lyn 6/8. It's players like these that make a captain's job easier. Val and Carole were both called upon for one match each, proving age is no barrier to playing competitive tennis.



Photo: Penny, Val & Ruth sporting Club blues on a chilly September evening.

Mixed A

Despite a miracle in the final match it looks like the A team's reign in Div. 1 is finally at an end. The A team, largely thanks to Caroline's efforts, had managed to stay in Div. 1 somehow, for many years.

However, I fancy we will bounce back fairly swiftly if Kelly and Matt are available for the majority of matches next season. And Daz manages more than one match. Fiona has played all five matches so far this season, I suggest we all find out what she is eating. Inspiring.

Mixed B

After quite a significant change to the squad structure this team was always up against it this season. Div. 3 is quite a challenging standard and we knew at the start of the season that relegation was a likely outcome.

To compound matters, we yet again could not coerce anybody into the captain's role so yet again up steps the Chairman. We managed to field a team for the first few matches but, sadly, we defaulted more than one match and we were automatically relegated.

Much like the Mens B, I'm not sure it's sustainable to enter teams in the League without a captain. Something worthy of discussion at the AGM.

Mixed C

The C team were only 2 points shy of safety but did not survive the final match. Close but no cigar.

Penny has managed to field a full side for every match despite confusion over

a rearranged match. 13 players in total have been given the opportunity to play which demonstrates excellent captaincy. Nice to see the Ashby's back playing for Banbury, and they won 2/2.

Tennis Oxfordshire Winter League 2023/24

Mens A

Out of 11 matches we only suffered defeat in the final match of the season, by which time we had already guaranteed promotion back to the Premier division in second place.



Darren was comfortably the stand out performer winning an impressive 11/12. Elliot played an excellent 10/11 matches and Leo 8/11 which was pivotal in our success. The Premier division will be challenging and hopefully Matt will play more than one match this winter.

Crucially, Brice and Adrian chipped in with 5 matches each. Having B team players strong enough to step into the

fray can be the difference between fourth and second.

Mens B

Thanks to enthusiasm from Peter we made a last minute decision to field a second team in the winter - for the first time in a few years.

They finished a very comfortable second and gained promotion to Div. 6 for this forthcoming winter. Blake and, of course, John played the most matches. Peter had to call upon twelve players in total across the eleven matches.

Hopefully this season will prove to be a success under different captaincy.

Ladies A

Finishing third from bottom can result in relegation in this 11 team per division set up, but I'm pleased to report that the ladies have stayed in Div. 1. Relegation by just one point would have been very harsh.

Fiona did an excellent job as captain calling upon thirteen players in total. The main stays of the team were Fiona, Jo and Caroline.

Match Secretary Rod Haddrell writes: **Banbury Tennis League 2024**



We have experienced the highs and the lows in the BTL this season. To begin with in the Floodlit League (2023-24) we secured promotion as divisional winners after 2 previous years of back to back relegation. We will now play in Division 2 starting on 23rd September.

However, in the Summer League, our A team has unfortunately just finished 2nd from bottom and has been relegated from Division 1 as a consequence. With 1 match to play, the B team though was still sitting in a promotion spot to escape Division 4. It all depended upon the final match result between Hooky & Deddington. After a thrilling season, the former beat the latter and our team won promotion by a single point. Congratulations!

However, this is a heartfelt plea to all ladies at the Club interested in playing competitive midweek tennis for our Club - please put yourselves forward!

The nature of this format of team competition (3 men and 3 women per team) meant that we had plenty of men but a real dearth of ladies. As the teams started the season in opposite divisions (1st and 4th) there was quite a spread in the playing standards required to compete. Given that we had to make full use of the rule allowing players to "play up" twice before being "locked in" to the higher team, it was perhaps inevitable that our A team would struggle and the B team would also be hit by losing players to the A team.



We can be quite optimistic looking forward and could even field 3 summer teams next season which would provide a clear smooth progression between playing abilities. Two things are required: a willing captain for the C team, and some additional playing ladies so that we have greater squad depth.

Coaching



Head Coach Rosie Clark writes: Thank you to everyone who has welcomed us into Banbury Tennis Club. We value how positively coaching is received and thank the Committee for facilitating court availability for the Coaching Programme.

Our first Free Tennis for All event was very well supported with over 100 attendees. Special thanks to Rob for his management and BBQ, Nigel for his ball machine and on court action (plus banner hanging), Alastair for his membership assistance as well as cakes from his wife, John for his BBQ skills, Penny for her negotiating and catering prowess and also those who spread the word and delivered flyers. Apologies to those whom I have not mentioned in name. We look forward to repeating this event in April 2025.

Junior Coaching

We have enjoyed getting to know the current players and introducing new ones. We have expanded the number of groups in the Programme and started to increase the range of ability sessions within age groups.

The hall in the pavilion behind the Club House has been utilised as an alternative in poor weather for the younger players. Junior teams have started to re-enter the Oxfordshire Leagues and we hope to expand this in Summer 2025.



Adult Coaching

Sessions have developed on a Monday evening and Cardio Tennis has also joined the schedule on a Thursday morning. All classes have encouraged new players into the Club either in the form of memberships or non-member fees.

We aim to continue to develop the Coaching Programme in both participant numbers and sessions over the next year and thank everyone again for your support.

Autumn Programme

BANBURY TENNIS CLUB

Mondays from 9/09

6:15-7:15pm Adult **Beginners** (adults & teens)

7:15-8:15pm Adult **Improvers** (adults & teens)

Wednesdays from 4/09

4-5pm **Red** Beginners/Improvers (ages 4-6)

5-6pm **Orange** Beginners/Improvers (ages 7-9)

6-7pm **Junior** Beginners/Improvers (ages 10+)

Thursdays from 5/09

9:30-10:30am **Cardio** Tennis (adults & teens)

Saturdays from 7/09

8:15-9am **Tots** (ages 2-4)

9-10am **Red** Beginners/Improvers (ages 4-6)

9-10am **Junior** Beginners (ages 10+)

10-11am **Orange** Beginners/Improvers (ages 7-9)

10-11am **Junior** Improvers (ages 10+)

11am-12pm **Junior** Advanced Improvers (ages 13+)



Your Committee

We again have a vacancy for an Entertainments Officer. This post is not particularly arduous – perhaps organising the fish & chips van occasionally etc. However, it contributes to “the collective good” and relieves some of the load from your existing and future committee members.

Our Chairman, Rob Gray, has volunteered to be our Treasurer next year, succeeding Matt Street who has done a sterling job for the last few years; thank you Matt. As a finance expert, Rob is well-qualified for the task, however, he is also one of our trustees and the next Chair (AGM-permitting).



Frankly, Rob is overtasked and has already done more than his fair share. Rob has been running the show for the last seventeen years – yes, 17! - and was previously on your committee for another 5.

Understandably, he has said he will stand down as Chair after one more season. *That means we need a new Chair for this time next year.* (Please note that we're amending our Constitution to read “Chair” instead of “Chairman”, so ladies and others are welcome to volunteer, too! No Chair, no Club, no tennis. Please think about the ongoing longevity of the Club and what **you** are doing towards it.

As the Comms Guy, I'd personally like to thank Kyle Smith for his continual updating of our web site, helping our club. And he's not even a member! In the days when social media and 3-word sound bytes seem to have taken over from proper conversation and information, web sites seem to be relegated to the same standing as, perhaps, fax machines. Nonetheless, if you look at Artificial Intelligence, their massive data sources are not from Facebook or Instagram and the like. They mine *web sites*. If you ask an AI engine for the Club you find:



It appears to be a well-regarded tennis club in the Banbury area, given its high rating

The club seems to offer regular tennis facilities and likely memberships, though specific details about programs or membership options are not provided in the search results. As an established tennis club with good ratings, it likely offers opportunities for both casual and competitive play for tennis enthusiasts in Banbury

Certainly, most of the membership queries (75 so far this year) have come from Kyle's web site. Thanks, too, to your committee – they put up with my constant badgering; hence, this 13-page newsletter.

AGM Bar Open:7pm!

The AGM is set for 7.30pm on Tuesday 24th September in the Pavilion. This year we have the bar open **from 7pm!** Please come along and have a beer/wine or two a) to socialise and b) to make the proceedings run more fluidly.



As well as the usual summary of events and accounts, we will vote on some changes to our Constitution; these are mainly to update our documents to the current millennium.

update our documents to the current millennium.

PS The Ladies Singles final will start at 7pm too.

Summary

If I were to exercise editorial privilege then I'd say that our club is moving along with ups and downs. We're playing lots of tennis but it's evident that the teams need more players. Yes, we're lucky enough to have 6 courts and floodlights, but they need more maintenance. We've nearly a full committee, but we need more fresh input.

Your club typifies the trends in our society, which sees everyone busy-busy juggling priorities and, correctly, family comes first. We also need to keep fit and healthy whilst resisting the temptation to stay at home and spend time on devices.

Tennis achieves all three: it's a family sport (all can play, whatever their ages), it keeps you active and it gets you out in the fresh air.

If we want to keep this envious facility that we currently enjoy, your club, too, needs to remain healthy and active. We need more club activity.

