

Blackheath Squash Club - Chairman's Report 2025/26

Welcome to the 2025/26 Chairman's Report.

Membership - our membership remains at historically high levels. We currently have 257 members (2025: 258). Many thanks to our Membership Secretary Danny Dowling for enrolling our new members and collecting the annual membership fees.

Finance - The 2025 annual accounts show a cash balance of some £85k (2024: £96k). The Club is run on a not-for-profit basis and this cash is earmarked for the Club's continuing refurbishment, maintenance and future development. We were able to hold our annual membership subscriptions and court fees for 2024/25 at prior year levels with no increase despite increasing inflationary pressures. Many thanks to Neil Harris as Club Treasurer for prudent management of our financial affairs.

Kent League Teams – The Club put out two teams in the 2025 Summer Kent leagues with both facing a tough summer and which ended in relegation for both teams. Two teams also played in the 25/26 Winter Kent leagues with the 1st team ending solidly mid table in Div 3 whilst the 2nds were relegated out of Div 4. Thanks to team captains Olly Ruff (1st team) and Ville Leppanen/Jim Coventry (2nd team).

Tournaments and box leagues – The squash box leagues ran throughout the year and continue to be popular with members, currently 13 boxes with 78 participants. Many thanks to George Wooding for running the boxes during the year. The racket ball box league, established last year, ran throughout the year and now has two boxes. Many thanks to Danny Dowling for running the racketball boxes. The Club's Handicap Tournament was run in autumn 2025 and thanks to Alex Booth for organising. The Club's annual tournaments were run early summer 2026 with the Finals postponed to September 2026 due to the hot weather.

Junior squash – Junior coaching sessions run by coach Danny Dowling continue to be popular. The Club supported the London Youth Games by providing a junior squash squad for the Royal Borough of Greenwich.

Ladies squash – the Club's Ladies Squash Sunday evening sessions also continue to be popular. Many thanks to Danny Dowling and Pam Reid for organising the Ladies squash evenings.

Senior training and coaching – The Club's Sunday morning senior training sessions run by Club head coach Ville have run throughout the year and are well attended. Many thanks to Ville for the time and effort on running these sessions and to both Ville and Danny for providing coaching services to Club members.

Club Night – The Friday Club Nights on the first and third Fridays in the month ran throughout the year and by popular demand we added a members only social Club Night on the last Friday of the month. Many thanks to our Club Night volunteers for hosting these popular evenings.

Court maintenance – During the year we had the annual court maintenance work carried out which included improvements to the court floors. The work was carried out by a specialist squash court contractor and so far the results have been good.

Communications - Many thanks to Danny Dowling for maintaining the Club's website; Twitter feed; and the monthly Club newsletter. Thanks Danny! We also introduced WhatsApp groups for social squash and racketball to help members find games.

Club Renovations and future plans – 2025/2026 has been a relatively quiet year for club renovations. The main item was putting down gravel and weed suppressant sheeting on the external pathways around the club. Not somewhere most members see! It remains the long term aim of the Club to build two new squash courts on the slab adjacent to the squash building.

Garden works – Danny Dowling and Pam Reid continue to do a fantastic job improving the side garden, with new lighting and planting it looks really good and has greatly improved the external amenity of the club.

Conclusion - On behalf of the Committee I would like to thank all our members for their support for the Club. I would also like to thank the Committee and member volunteers who donate their time to make the Club a great experience for all and without whom the Club could not exist. We held a 'Meet the Committee' evening during the year and we will do the same for 2026/27 and hope to see more of our members at this event.

Enjoy your squash!

Kevin Clark
Chairman Blackheath Squash Club