Martin Zinkin personal statement

I’ve been a member of Coolhurst for about 15 years including two years as tennis secretary, and a tennis member on the GMC for the past two years.

I think what most members want from the club is simple: to be able to play their sport on top quality courts at whatever level of seriousness they choose, and to socialise afterwards in a great clubhouse and friendly atmosphere. To do that, we need to maintain and invest in our facilities and make sure the club continues to generate enough revenue to do this while also reducing our debt.

Five years ago, the tennis facilities were tired, the club owed £800k from the £1.3M spend on the new squash building, and our cash surplus would have been wiped out if we had lost the junior tennis program. While the position was not dire, some members felt we should suspend facilities improvements and cut costs until the debt was paid off. However, instead we chose to invest n we have greatly improved the tennis facilities (artificial clay courts 1-4, lighting on 6-9, replacement of grass courts on 9-11, and repainting 11-13) while paying down the debt every year. Even more importantly for the long-term viability of the club, we have grown a much larger and more diverse revenue base from exploiting new and growing existing revenue streams, increasing tennis membership, and simply running the club more efficiently. Because of this, the club is now in a strong financial position: we should be able to eliminate the debt over the next few years even with significant improvement in facilities, and despite the challenges of the pandemic.

Although we have increased playable court hours, tennis now faces a new challenge: the combination of record adult membership from enquiries driven by the new website and increased demand for tennis from members working more flexibly has changed the demand for courts. We need to continue to invest in the playing surfaces to expand as much as possible while making sure all members get a fair allocation of court time.