

# Oswestry Team Tennis



[www.oswestryteamentennis.co.uk](http://www.oswestryteamentennis.co.uk)

## NEWSLETTER No 24 – Spring 2025



Photo of Wendy Strefford and Blake/Shez

### Introduction

Hi everyone and hope you are all okay!

It has been a busy period for our club, parent group, Blake and me! Great strides have been made on a number of fronts recently which are all very encouraging.

However Blake and Shez's wedding at the end of April obviously takes pride of place in my report, and so looking forward to being there in the evening to wish them well at their wedding celebration. I have known Blake for what seems a very long time now, so it will be fantastic to see him move on as a happily married man!

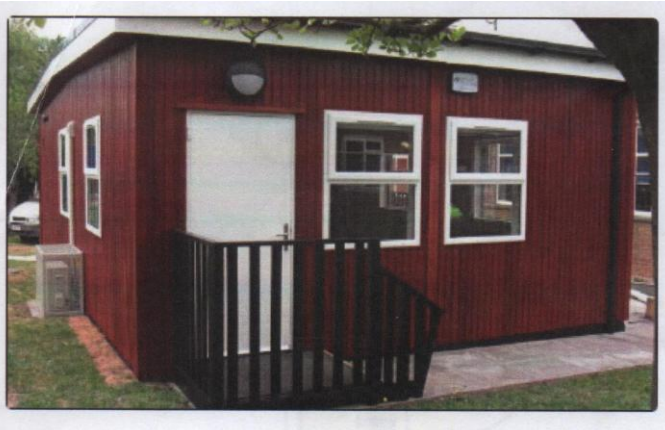
The other significant outcome to report on is our success with our application to Sport England for 12.5k which takes us to an amazing £103,000 against our budget for our Clubhouse project of 107k. Thus we have broken the back of the funding deficit with just 4k now to find from somewhere. Sure we will do this with your ongoing support.

Many thanks to our sponsors Sport England Movement Fund, Oswestry Lions, Oswestry Town Council, Oswestry Sports Forum, Mary Hignett Bequest Fund, Charlotte Hartey Foundation, and Stans Supermarket – Nisa for all their support amounting to an amazing 33k in the last six months.

My third and final sponsored walk is now ongoing, undertaking ten walks with some of my friends who have chosen the walk I will do with them, aiming for 100 miles in total, so thank you to those of you who have already supported our club and me. I have now completed three walks in Llangollen, Much Wenlock, and Ellesmere to Colemere, all with their good company and beautiful views. We still need to eliminate the 4k deficit, so pleased to advise my walk has already raised £387 so far towards my target of £1000, so please support it if you can and help us get closer.

Our AGM took place on 8<sup>th</sup> March and thank you to those of you who attended. I was reappointed your Chairman, and more importantly Wendy Strefford took on the role of Competition Organiser. Wendy was part of the original Committee responsible for setting up OTT in 2005, so it is very nice to have her back after a fifteen year absence on our Parent working group. We hope she will work well with our Head Coach Blake Strefford in putting on more competition as well as getting to know more of you on and off court!

## Clubhouse Update



Further to the above news about our successful funding, my focus in the last six months since we gained planning permission to demolish the workshop and replace with a modular building, has been on getting our 25 year lease signed off as we cannot get on site without it. I had two meetings in February with our solicitor and am now awaiting the outcome of our requested changes to the draft lease. We are though now in a good position to talk to our three contractors to tie up the dates and timescales.



**Mike Markham – our Head coach 2005-18 and inspiration behind our Clubhouse project.**

You may have seen previous articles about Mike in previous newsletters, so I thought it was time to write a short piece about him for our newer members who may not be aware of him and his achievements for our club.

Mike grew up in Bedfordshire as did Stephen Welti founder of OTT when it was based at Moreton Hall in the 1990's and it was Stephen who encouraged Mike to relocate to the back waters of rural North Shropshire in 1996. I met Mike and we quickly became friends and helped him to become a full time tennis coach working across North Shropshire. Mike became OTT Head Coach when the club moved to Cae Gas Park in 2005 until his sad demise from cancer aged 63 in 2018.

In his will, he very kindly donated £20,000 to help kickstart our clubhouse project. He was OTT through and through including mentoring Blake, and I know many of us still here miss his presence very much today. Our clubhouse will be very much his legacy.

### **Tennis2You Report – Blake Strefford**

In the next few weeks, we will be coming to the end of this term tennis coaching. Hope your child has enjoyed their tennis coaching this term even with the weather not being on our side. Let's hope the weather will be kind to us next term. Hopefully the need for suncream while coaching will be soon.

This term and for the rest of the year we have lots of events coming please see list below with the provisional dates for these events.

**Easter Team Challenge:** 12<sup>th</sup> April 2025

**Play Your Way to Wimbledon:** 24<sup>th</sup> May 2025

**OTT Open day:** 17<sup>th</sup> May 2025

**Oswestry Community Games:** 8<sup>th</sup> June 2025

**French Open Team Challenge:** 7<sup>th</sup> June 2025

**US Open Team Challenge:** 20<sup>th</sup> September 2025

**Monster Smash Team Challenge:** 18<sup>th</sup> October 2025

Team challenges are a good way for players at the club to put into practice what they have learnt in their coaching sessions and also learn how to play matches and compete in a fun environment. We

have 4 team challenges this year so hopefully you will all be able to support them as you did last year.

Now the weather is warming up, you may like to bring your child down to our courts outside their tennis lesson. Please have a look at our coaching schedule on our website to see when the courts are free and then please go to the park keepers and show them your membership card and they will be more the happy to let you onto the courts. I'm always happy to see children down at the courts outside their lessons playing against family members and maybe even teaching them a thing or two.

As stated above on the 17<sup>th</sup> May 2025 1-3pm we are hosting our 4<sup>th</sup> free open day at OTT after our success over last 3 years where we have seen players join the club and still playing today and enjoying their tennis. We invite all members to come down and get the courts busy to show how amazing our club is. Hopefully a few of you can make it.

As always, I would just like to finish off with a BIG thank you to everyone for your continued support.

We received an invitation to attend Oswestry Town Council Civic Dinner on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> March at the Memorial Hall. We have not had an invitation to this event for a number of years so it is very encouraging that Mayor Councillor Mike Isherwood who attended and spoke at our Awards evening in November thought of us as one of his worthy participants.

Ruth Sperring attended as our Club representative and photo shows her with Mayor and his family.



### **Rusty Rackets move their weekly venue to Rhosneigr**

For a change of scenery and to thank the ladies for their ongoing support for our Club with our Thursday weekly sessions, we invited Rusty Rackets to join my wife Sally and me at our family holiday house in Rhosneigr. Needless to say, we booked the single court in the village for some fun tennis as well as having time spent on the beach enjoying the sunshine and calm weather.

To be recommended – thank you Rusty Rackets for a memorable few days up here.

Needless to say for those unable to make the trip, Rusty Rackets were on court on Thursday morning in Cae Glas Park!



## Club Sunday afternoon free sessions from 3pm to 5pm



We introduced this free opportunity for you last Summer to supplement your child's coaching, and for parents, and it has added hugely to their weekly tennis. The attendances have grown and we now have 14 children on our books from mini red through to the full game as well as a few parents but we do need more, so why not come down and give it a go?!

It is not compulsory to attend each week, you do what you can around your other family priorities, you do not have to stay for the two hours on offer, but we will be pleased to see you whenever!

After the clocks go forward, please note we will be moving the session to 4pm – 6pm.

### Grant success - Very well done Maisie!

Maisie Anderson our Junior Rep on our Parents Group has recently secured a £250 grant from Oswestry Youth Forum to run cardio sessions for teenagers though the summer and buy some equipment to go with the scheme.

Maisie had to write the application and appear before a Youth Forum panel to present the case all by herself. This was no easy feat as this was the first time she had applied for a grant, so very well done, and I look forward to seeing Blake's cardio in action for this new group.



### New Activities during the day

Blake and I are currently working on starting two initiatives to start after Easter – Adult Mini Red sessions and Walking Tennis for the less mobile. Walking tennis will be run under Tennis2You, whilst Adult Mini red sessions will come under my jurisdiction similar to Rusty Rackets. It is hoped that each activity will increase participation during the day and usage on our courts, without impacting on our junior coaching.

### Diary of Club Key Events for 2025

AGM 8<sup>th</sup> March

Virtual Walk to Wimbledon – Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> June Cae Glas Park

Awards Night – Late November Date TBC

Clive Knight – Chairman/Trustee/ Assistant Treasurer

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