

SUNBURY SPORTS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

March 2011

Welcome to the first SSA newsletter

This is the first edition of what I hope will be a regular newsletter to members of Sunbury Sports Association.

Why do we think a publication like this is necessary or useful? Well, you are all members of the SSA, although probably quite a few of you may not even know that you are. Even if you do know about the SSA, you may not think it's something you need to be involved in or worry too much about—after all, you're a member of the Cricket Club, Bowls Club or whatever, and that's your main reason for using the place and that's what you're primarily concerned with.

However, whatever sport you play on the SSA's premises, you need to be aware of the role that the SSA plays, and how much your ability to play your sport here depends on the financial stability of the Association, and the sustainability of the infrastructure that sits behind the organisation that provides your sport and social facilities.

The SSA is a trust which owns the ground and its facilities. It gets its income from affiliation fees

from the sports and other clubs which use it, and from the bar and use of the function room in the clubhouse. To do this, the SSA has to maintain the building and employ the staff to run the bar, kitchen and function room facilities, and to maintain the ground to a standard suitable for the high level of sport which is played here.

It is a difficult balancing act, especially in the current economic climate, and we are currently operating at no better than break-even level, which leaves no spare resources to do anything more than basic maintenance to the facilities, let alone invest in their enhancement.

This newsletter sets out some of the issues currently facing the SSA. What is clear is that to secure its future, the Association needs more help, involvement and support from its members. The simple fact is that unless the Club makes more money from the bar and function room use, it will struggle to pay its way. There is a common theme running through the articles in the newsletter—we are doing what we can but we need more support, commitment, ideas and input. Read what we have to say, and ask yourselves if there is anything you can do to get things moving ahead a bit quicker.

Come to the “Beat the Bar Budget Bash” on Saturday 19th March. Free admission - live music

As we explain above, one of the only ways we can maintain the SSA facilities is to maximise the business we do in the bar. Every year, we set a budget for bar takings, which reflects the income we need to cover our running costs.

We are approaching the end of the financial year, and it looks like we will be a little way short of this year's target. So to help reach it, we have decided to have a party, and we've called it the “Beat the Bar Budget Bash”.

It's on Saturday 19th March from about 8pm until Jack can't get any more money in the till or runs out of beer,

It's a chance for everybody in the Club to come along with their friends and have a fun evening and in the process spend a bit of money over the bar to help reach our target.

The start of the cricket season isn't too many weeks away, so maybe it's also a chance for a gathering of the clans to get ourselves in a really positive frame of mind for the season, and maybe introduce some new people to the Club as well.

It's also a chance for the members of the various clubs to get together - something we don't do often enough. If we can get 150 people there, and everyone spends a tenner, that's £1,500 that could make a difference to hitting the budget or not.

There will be live music, with some good-time rock 'n' roll and '60s R&B, and admission is absolutely free, so there's no excuse not to come along and have a fun night.

It's a no-frills occasion - no food provided, so have that curry beforehand - just a chance for a party with a purpose. We hope to see you all there.

Plans for improving the clubhouse despite limited resources

The SSA has what is called the House Committee, which is a sub-committee of the SSA Management Committee, whose responsibility it is to look after the maintenance and improvement of the Clubhouse and all its facilities.

The problem is, of course, as we've explained above, that there simply isn't any surplus of income over our basic running costs to pay for even essential repairs, let alone any substantial renovation or improvements.

However, we are looking at strategies to deal with this problem, which involves seeking outside funding, primarily from the sporting bodies who have budgets to fund this kind of thing.

The Cricket Club, in particular, having achieved Clubmark status, is looking at available options. We attended an ECB seminar in November at the National Self-Build and Renovation Centre in Swindon, and are in the process of getting a condition report on the building as a preliminary to opening discussions.

We have now had a follow-up meeting with the managers at Surrey Trust, which is the body which allocates ECB and Sport England funding within the county. This was very positive, and we are aiming to get ourselves selected as a "Showcase Club", in which case we would be recognised as a focus for investment in new or upgraded facilities.

Urgent assistance needed from a qualified electrician

As noted in the article above, there are jobs we need doing that require professional input which the Association currently cannot afford, so we are appealing for volunteers from within our membership who can help.

One of the most urgent and important is that we need to do a comprehensive electrical survey of the whole building to assess the state of it and what needs doing. If we can get this done, and do any work that the survey indicates is necessary, we can probably get a reduction in our insurance premiums, quite apart from the fact that in a building which has a lot of wood in its structure, we have a duty to ensure absolute safety where electrical systems are concerned.

If anyone is prepared to undertake this task, please let Paul Watts know on 01932 788449 or by e-mail at paulwatts1946@googlemail.com. Your help would be extremely valuable and very much appreciated.

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The Trust representatives have arranged a date in late March to do a site visit to assess our needs in terms of upgrading or replacing the clubhouse facilities, and we will naturally be putting forward a strong case. We will see what happens after that, but we hope that we could lay the groundwork for achieving some substantial funding to improve our facilities at some stage in the future.

We hope that the strategy we are pursuing could at least provide funding for a rolling programme of renovation probably over a couple of years, supplemented by targeted fund-raising events designed to enable specific projects to be done. The House Committee has already done its own informal survey of the building, and identified a list of well over 20 repair and renovation jobs that need doing. Some of these can be done as part of our "workforce" weekends in the spring, but others need more skilled input.

The simple fact is that, even if we get funding, we will always need to have both a willing team of volunteers to do some of the basic work and skilled people from within the Club prepared to offer their services free or at a very modest cost.

Some people might think this is an unreasonable expectation, but in the same way that the officers both of the individual clubs and the SSA give their time and services to help keep the place going and the sports happening, we would like to think that members who have other relevant skills would also be prepared to volunteer their services.

This programme will need everyone's support to make it work, so please be prepared to support what the SSA is trying to achieve in difficult times.

Volunteer needed to take over as SSA Secretary

At the Annual General Meeting of the SSA in late November, Wendy Lowe stood down as Secretary of the SSA. Wendy has done a huge amount of work over the years on behalf of the Hockey and Cricket Clubs, and in organising social events like the Summer Ball and New Year's Eve Dinner, quite apart from her role within the SSA, and we are grateful to her for this.

However, it does mean that we need to identify someone to take over, and so far we have not been successful, so via the newsletter, could we ask if anyone from the Club memberships is prepared to take on this role.

It does not involve a huge commitment of time, but it does require certain things to be done in an organised and timely way, so good administrative skills are probably the most important thing.

The Secretary organises the Management Committee Meetings and Sub-Committees, and takes and circulates the Minutes of the Management Committee and AGM, as well as writing various letters (not very many) that need to be done from time to time.

It's an important position in helping the SSA to operate efficiently, so we do need to fill the post as soon as possible. If you think you can help, please let Paul Watts know on 01932 788449 or by e-mail at paulwatts1946@googlemail.com.

More music events planned for the Club

First “Friday Rock Night” planned for 15th April

As part of the SSA Management Committee’s strategy to increase the usage of the function room on both midweek and weekend evenings, the SSA Chairman and Bar Committee held a meeting in February with people involved in music and comedy from around the local area to find ways of getting more music events promoted in the Club by outside organisations, primarily in order to maximise the income from the bar.

There were eighteen people at the meeting, and some very positive and exciting results came out of it. A Richmond-based promotion company, Stayin’ Alive (www.stayin-alive.org.uk), is staging a once-a-month Friday rock night, hopefully beginning on 15th April with The ‘60s All-Stars (www.the60sallstars.co.uk). There will be another e-mail newsletter nearer the date confirming details, so keep your eyes open for further information.

Top jazz-funk outfit Protect the Beat (www.protectthebeat.com) whose management is Sunbury-based, and which features Derek Nash (of Jools Holland’s Big Band) and Winston Blissett (of Massive Attack) as well as local drummer Darby Todd (currently recording with Rick Parfitt Jr.), are promoting their own gig on Friday 27th May. Legendary sixties soul star Geno Washington & the Ram-Jam Band will also be promoting their own event—date yet to be fixed.

During the winter months, we are planning a regular Sunday afternoon jazz workshop, and we are looking at staging midweek rock and blues jam nights as well. Once the place gets a reputation for staging good events, it should attract other users and a regular clientele,

We hope events like this will appeal to existing members and bring a more vibrant atmosphere to the place as well as bringing in other strands of the community who will become regular users and members of the Association, and in the process bring valuable additional income in to the coffers.

Halliford Colts FC affiliation to SSA to finish at the end of football season

As you probably know, Halliford Colts became affiliated to the SSA a year ago in order to play their junior football matches at the Club and to use it as a base for their Club which they have never had in the past.

We entered into this arrangement to replace some of the income lost as a result of the Hockey Club merging with Walton and Weybridge Hawks and basing themselves primarily at St. Paul’s all-weather pitch.

Unfortunately, the relationship has not proved successful from a variety of points of view. The late start and early finish to the football season at the Club ne-

Club hosts another successful Albert Skinner Jazz Night

Last autumn saw the second Albert Skinner Jazz Night at the Club, once again featuring Sunbury’s own godfather of British modern jazz Tony Kinsey with his Quintet. Promoted by the SSA in partnership with other community organisations who underwrote the event, it was another very successful evening, attracting an audience of over 100.

It proved once again that, for all its faults, the Club provides a very atmospheric venue for this kind of event, with the addition of a modest amount of theatrical lighting making for a very funky ambience.



The Tony Kinsey Quintet in full flow at the Albert Skinner Jazz Night at the Club, with Tony on drums.

Another recent musical innovation for the Club was a Ceilidh Night, organised by Harfield Road neighbour Corinne Sharp, which attracted a crowd of well over 100, dancing enthusiastically to ‘live’ Celtic music. Corinne is an accomplished musician, and took part in our gathering of local musical minds referred to in the adjacent article, and we hope she will be able to bring other similarly successful events to the Club.

cessitated by the requirements of cricket has proved unworkable for HCFC, who have had to make provision for other pitches at each end of the season, especially having lost so many fixtures to bad weather.

In addition, although the football club is very happy with the quality of the playing facilities, it has proved a difficult sell to members to use the club as a social base, especially among older age groups who do not play here because of the size of pitches we can provide.

As a result, Halliford Colts have decided not to continue with their affiliation after the end of the football season. This is sad, as many people in the SSA have long-time associations with HCFC, and of course it will affect our income. We will need to seek another partner for winter use in order to generate revenue. If any existing members are able to bring ideas or introductions to the table to assist in this process please let us know.