



2020 Annual Report

Since we last met in July of last year, the significant event has been the Covid 19 pandemic. Oblivious to the gathering storm, however, OSRA successfully completed the leagues of both Summer and Winter 1 2019 and welcomed back Chipping Norton Squash Club as well as an additional team from Thame.

Rumours first started to circulate in early January of this year of a possible viral catastrophe and by March we had aborted Winter 2 and for the next few months, like much else, squash ground to a halt. Summer and Winter 1 were cancelled and the prospects for Winter 2 2021 seem very remote.

Thankfully, a number of courts across the county have re-opened albeit with restrictions but these have largely been in the private sector and not in the predominantly council run leisure centres. Take up has been patchy with many players either not prepared to take the risk or preferring instead for a return to play when normal conditions resume.

The committee has met formally just once during the crisis but has conferred electronically a number of times on a variety of issues. We have followed government and ES guidance and duly passed it on to clubs and individual members.

Financially, having been in a healthy position pre-Coronavirus, we are confident (ed. – certain) the Association can survive no matter how long the delay in returning to competitive league squash. It is hoped that likewise, all clubs and teams will survive but that may be dependent to some extent on the approach taken by various leisure centres as well as issues such as obtaining grants and loans and settling insurance policies successfully.

The lockdown of squash and its very slow revival is disappointing to us all. Nevertheless, OSRA has sought to ensure clubs, coaches and players had access to information direct from England Squash, and also looked to support coaches financially where needed. Grants and loans were offered and given to the latter especially in helping them ensure their qualifications were up to date and provide income in exchange for future coaching assistance at county level.

In the meantime, despite the challenging circumstances, Andrew Wilson has taken on the task of developing a strategy to increase participation in the sport across our domain and at every level but especially amongst the juniors. Ross Gore will be his major support but parents and club players will also be encouraged to lend a hand. As the new Chair of OSRA, Andrew will be well placed to deliver the programme and it is hoped we can recruit a new County Secretary to provide much needed assistance.

Thankfully, the committee has survived intact although County Coach, Chloe Marshall left to take up a post at Millfield School and OSRA would like to thank her for her hard work and fantastic progress with the county juniors. In February 2020, Ross Gore was appointed as replacement and ran his first junior county session prior to lockdown. As a postscript since year end, Ross has begun running sessions again with the first in September and has plans to restructure the county junior programme.

We welcomed the addition of an appointed Welfare Officer in Lucia Bell whilst Julian Moss, Steve Rogers and Ken Reid continue in their valuable roles as Divisional Managers.



Round One of the Inter County Championships didn't go brilliantly result wise although the commitment and enthusiasm was excellent. Phase Two was cancelled due to you know what! We may not be great on court but we are a community of markers as another course was held, this time attracting around 20 individuals!

In response to a 2019 AGM prompt, a certain proportion of OSRA funds were voted to finance various initiatives operated by member clubs. In addition, we received England Squash funds of £2,560 towards programmes run at Banbury West End, Ferry Leisure Centre, Hithercroft Squash Club and Thame Racquets Fitness Centre. As at 31 May 2020, we still had £881 remaining from previous ES funding rounds to be used on future projects.

Welfare Officer Report (Lucia Bell)

My appointment as OSRA Welfare Officer began in November 2019 after being interviewed by three members of the OSRA committee.

- Employed as a Registered General nurse with a Specialist role in Safeguarding Children.
- Qualified for over 30 years working in the National Health Service, safeguarding for the last ten years.
- Experienced as trainer for the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board
- Currently Operational Manager for the Safeguarding Children team in Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust.

The focus of this new role in OSRA has been to develop safeguarding procedures and Code of Conduct so that the welfare of Children and vulnerable adults remains paramount. These include guidance on when and how to report concerns when there is a safeguarding issue disclosed or identified.

OSRA has adopted and takes guidance from the Safeguarding Children Policy produced by England Squash. This guidance will be uploaded onto the OSRA website and when COVID restrictions are lifted I plan to make further contact with the clubs.

Everyone has a responsibility to safeguard and protect all young people and adults at risk. A key part of child safeguarding is spreading the message about keeping children safe and building a culture of always acting in the best interest of all children.

The welfare officer has an oversight of the Safeguarding Children training that the coaches are required to attend and I will be completing the required 'Time to Listen' training when there is availability.

Please email or call me regarding any safeguarding concern relating to a child or vulnerable adult and I will be happy to offer support advice and guidance.

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Lucia Bell - OSRA Welfare Officer



County Coach Report (Ross Gore)

Sadly this report is shorter than I would have liked due to obvious reasons. The month after taking the post of Head Coach we went into lockdown. So with little to report on the playing side of things I have focused on the potential future structure of the junior county setup.

Alex Perry and I have been busy in securing funding through England Squash and the South Regional forum for some future projects. I have initiated and run the first of three, return back to squash sessions for our juniors. We are offering these free of charge using some of the funding we secured during the lockdown.

- £750 for primary schools
- £250 Talent Pot - reserved for a day of coaching for elite county juniors
- £375 for county junior training until end 2020
- £500 to support county development work
- £900 for new projects

I have been collaborating closely with Andrew Wilson on his new development plan and strategy for the county which we hope to start the rollout shortly. We both feel that a grass roots approach is needed to increase participation in the county. New for 2021 will be the introduction of a development squad for those players currently not in the county coaching programme. The aim of this new squad will be to increase participation numbers with aspiring juniors and give them the opportunity to have coaching at a county level. I hope it will also encourage more people to enter the junior county closed.

I am making a new website for the county juniors that will be a source of information for parents and players. Highlights will include

- Who we are and our structure
- Our culture
- Coaching team
- Dates for training
- Match reports

Ross Gore – OSRA County Coach