

Berkhamsted Lawn Tennis & Squash Rackets Club Statement – 9th Jan 2021.

This statement has been issued today by BLT&SRC to correct some potentially misleading information recently issued by BFC. I have spoken with BFC Chairman Steve Davis and agreed that BLT&SRC would put the facts in writing to avoid the potential for any further misunderstanding. The comments the club is responding to are, “the tennis club is a private members’ club” and “...its members can run off with profit they make...”. Also, “their site is just as valuable for housing as Broadwater” which might be interpreted to mean that sale of our site is being considered.

To avoid any doubt, Berkhamsted Tennis & Squash Club (“BLT&SRC”) is a Community Amateur Sports Club (or “CASC”), and members are blocked legally from “running off with profit” through the Club’s Constitution. The relevant extract of the club’s constitution is shown below:

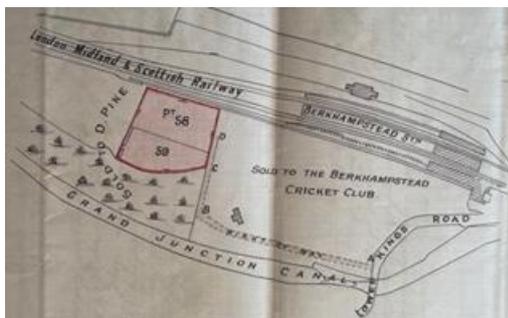
2.1 The Club is a non-profit making organisation. All profit and surpluses arising from normal core operations of the Club will be used to maintain or improve the Club’s facilities, players, or playing and spectator experience or to invest in the reputation of the club amongst the community. No surplus will be distributed other than to another community amateur sports club for lawn tennis or squash, to the Lawn Tennis Association for use in community related lawn tennis initiatives, or to England Squash for use in community related squash initiatives.

The legal ownership of land and assets of the club are vested in the club’s trustees (who are independent of the management committee).

5.2 The Trustees shall be appointed by the Club Council and the property of the Club (other than cash which shall be under the control of the Treasurer) shall be vested in them, to be dealt with by them as the Club Council shall from time to time direct by resolution (of which an entry in the minutes shall be conclusive evidence).

The club does own a valuable piece of land which was purchased back in 1924 from Brownlow Richard Christopher Tower, the then owner of the Ashridge Estate. The attached photo is a plan showing the two plots of land purchased by the Tennis & Croquet Club. [It is interesting to note that at that time the club’s neighbours were Berkhamsted Cricket Club (who had purchased what is now the BSGCA land) and Mr D Pike Esq who used the land to produce watercress (his is the land now owned by Dacorum Borough Council)].

It might be hard to imagine how the grounds might have looked at that time and to help people to understand, I have attached an old photo gives a glimpse at the landscape back then. If you look beyond the castle (to the left of the photo) you can see the Cricket Club (where football was played as well) and then the grass tennis courts and croquet lawns in the far distance.



It was only in the 1950’s that three hard tennis courts were built on the adjoining land owned by the BSGCA and Berkhamsted Hard Court Tennis Club was formed. In 1963 the two tennis clubs merged.

Unlike BFC which is a limited company, our community amateur sports club owns most of our grounds and the rest is secured under a long-term lease. The Club’s Trustees have no plans to sell their land now or in the future. As Chairman of BLT&SRC, I do understand BFC’s desire to stay at their historical town centre site and would have some concerns for our club if the BFC site was ever developed. However, until a planning application is submitted, it is difficult for the club to know the correct response.

As part of the sporting community, we want to ensure that BFC thrives like all sports clubs in the town whether their future is as at Broadwater or ultimately elsewhere in the town.

Mike Hawkes
Chairman
BLT&SRC.