



Paul Harris

**Personal Statement for role of Squash
Member for 2021 AGM**

Proposer: Charlie Logan

Secunder: Laurence Higham

I've been a squash player for 45 years and a member at Coolhurst since 2011. My ambitions in competitive squash so far have gained several national titles on the European Masters circuit, captaincy of Scotland at the Home Internationals, and as a winning team member with Middlesex at the National County Championships on three occasions.

But enough about me.

More importantly, through many trips to squash tournaments across North America and Europe I believe I'm able to recognise what represents excellence in squash playing facilities and indeed what motivates participation in the most energetic, intense and competitive sport in the world. In what other activity can you burn up to 1000 calories an hour with a good cardio workout to boot?

After over a year of lockdown, our sport has taken a real hit in participation levels due to its enclosed nature. Sadly, my initial relaunch of the Club's squash league for 125 members in October was cut short by the second lockdown (huge thanks are due to my predecessors Neil and Adrian who ran the Club's internal leagues for nearly 20 years).

As the road map from lockdown continues, full squash returns from mid-May. My aim would be to support Charlie Logan and his team with plans for a wider relaunch of squash at the Club, by introducing a new internal league platform (developed by fellow member Peter Baum). Together with tournaments, demonstration events and other promotional activities we want to ensure the widest possible exposure of squash to retain existing and attract prospective members, mirroring the success of our tennis section in attracting new members.

On playing facilities, we do need a strategy to improve our offer, as there is now a clear lag with competitors in London who have invested heavily in functional squash facilities and new revenue generating sports such as Padel. Our facilities should be a magnet for competition play by catering for players, coaches, referees, and spectators. That vision must promote Coolhurst's wider appeal as a tournament venue and to establish a pyramid of excellence for junior and senior players within the Middlesex, UK, and European orbit.

I hope I can rely on support of members to help bring these plans forward.