

To: The Dufferin Club of Brantford
 From: the Lawn Bowling Tournament Committee

Annual Report 2017

This has been a difficult season for Lawn Bowling Tournaments. Membership of Lawn Bowlers at the Dufferin Club is at an all-time low and many other clubs across south-western Ontario are also experiencing a decline in numbers of active members.

We had scheduled 7 tournaments for the 2017 season but were forced to cancel 2. The scheduled tournament for WP/MP on Friday July 21 received only 4 entries and there was uncertainty about the sponsor. Brant Family Eye Care did not return any messages, emails or phone calls.

The scheduled tournament for Novice WP/MP on Saturday August 19 received only 2 entries. It has been suggested that we offer this tournament next season with the stipulation that only one member of the team need be a Novice.

We were to host a Provincial playdown but the entries for this were few due to the greens so they were accommodated at Norwich.

Maintaining the greens in a suitable condition for tournaments has been extremely difficult this year despite efforts by Andrea Hebb and Karen Jackson to hire staff for this purpose. Karen has spent many hours weeding so that regular club play could take place.

Our first tournament of the season attracted 6 entries. We held a successful event but there were some concerns expressed about the draw for the third round needing some unconventional match-ups of winners and losers to avoid teams playing each other twice. Because of this we stated that we would not run any future tournament for less than 8 entries.

On a positive note, we were able to run 4 later tournaments with 8 entries each. Due to the generosity of our sponsors we were able to offer some worthwhile prizes. We gave visitors a positive experience through kitchen donations of snacks and fruit. Many visitors, even while admitting that our greens were 'challenging', commented that it was enjoyable to visit our club and they always felt welcome.

In summary the tournaments played:

- June 17 - Ye Old Tyme Bowlers 6 teams prize total \$210 Club proceeds \$194
- July 1 - Bruton Investment Group 8 teams prize total \$360 Club proceeds \$308
- August 7 - Brantford Honda 8 teams prize total \$360 Club proceeds \$271
- September 4 - McCleister Funeral Home 8 teams prize total \$240 Club proceeds \$262
- September 9 - Eagle Place Seniors, Ingham Monuments prize total \$290 Club proceeds \$334.50

NB Club proceeds include a 50/50 draw at each tournament. Detailed statements were provided after each tournament.

2018 Season

There is a serious possibility that we may not be able to run any open tournaments in 2018. However if we do not submit any proposals to the District committee and then do want to hold a tournament we could find ourselves with very few options for dates. Cancelling a tournament is easy – trying to insert one into a crowded calendar mid-season is not.

The following dates are proposed for submission to the District. Dates were chosen to reflect the calendars of 2016 and 2017.

- Saturday June 16 OP sponsors Ye Old Tyme Bowlers and Eagle Place Seniors.
- Sunday July 1 WP/MP sponsor Bruton Investment Group (Canada Day)
- Monday August 6 WP/MP sponsor Brantford Honda (Civic Holiday)
- Friday August 17 or Saturday August 18 OP but at least one member of each team must be a Novice. Sponsor McCleister Funeral Home
- Tuesday September 4 or Saturday September 8 OS sponsor Ingham Monuments and sandwiches from Tranquility Place Retirement Homes and Apartments

Submitted by Diane Pope on behalf of the Lawn Bowling Tournament Committee

Hello!

After volunteering for 4 years, then taking 2 years off, I came back to sit on the Dufferin Club Board of Directors this season, to assist in the operations of the tennis club. We had a good year considering all the adversity.

The season started with our Annual Open House in April, attended by MPP Dave Levac, and Deputy Mayor Cheryl Antoski. Dave saw, and realized the state of our old facility, and stated he would support a round table meeting to be held with City reps from Parks and Rec, our Dufferin Club Executive, and ward councillors to discuss plans for now and the future.

Once again, Mother Nature was not kind to us in the spring, and the cooler and wetter than normal conditions prevailed into late July, making it very difficult to get members to join. If we don't get them to join early in our short tennis season, it's very difficult once July and holiday season hits.

With extensive advertising, using many avenues to promote the club throughout the city, we got the membership back up around 200.

Focus was made on filling our Summer Kids Camp, and having kids under 18 join for free with an Adult Membership. Our membership fee was set at 140\$ for the season. I feel strongly that, due to the state of our club, we should have charged 80\$, and strive to get more players involved in the sport, rather than focusing on the \$\$'s. It's always a very hard decision. At the end of the day, we are really here to promote tennis, and get as many people as we can to play this great game. The sport is seeing a big increase in participation across the country, and now is the time to build a new facility for tennis, pickleball, and other racquet sports, ideally with a year round facility.

We took upon a big project this summer, repairing the playing surface of Court 6, our signature court, with the Practice Wall and mural. This court was in ruins, and an eyesore. Although it plays much better, and looks great, it's far from perfect. We also greatly improved courts 1 and 5. The appearance of the Dufferin Club was greatly improved, plus a lot safer for the players.

As the season went on, the club was often very busy, and the atmosphere was alive with members playing the game we love. Kids Summer Camps were very well attended, as was the Fall High School participation, leading up to their championship tournaments.

Unfortunately, our club tournaments were not good, with only the Men's Over 40 having enough players. The reasons are obvious, we just don't have the players, or the top end players who drive these events, and this is due to the condition of our courts, and the fact we are over 45 years old, and badly need a new facility. Players have opportunities to play on better courts outside of the City, such as Paris, Mt. Pleasant, Burford, and St. George. Our round robins had decent participation throughout the summer, as did our pickleball, and the ladies clinics. We had a very successful Cystic Fibrosis fundraiser in August.

Sadly, we lost our interurban participation a couple years ago due to our poor court playing surfaces.

I'd like to thank Aldo Pignotta, Dave Cureatz, Garry Horsnell, and Lee Hendon for their valuable help around the club this year. These are guys you don't have to ask to help ... they are always just there offering.

Special thanks to our tennis pro, Dave Stewart, who does a very professional job year after year, especially running the Kid's Summer Camps. Thanks to Raina, Dima, Porsha and Jackson ... our summer student staff, for their work this season ... much appreciated.

Thanks to everyone on the 2017 Executive. We all did the best we could as volunteers.

The time has come to rebuild, whether here at this present location, or elsewhere in the City of Brantford. We have all strived for many many years to maintain our club and make Dufferin Park a welcoming place to visit in Brantford. I see how quickly this city is growing, and the need for a modern tennis facility. We are not the only ones needing upgrades to aging facilities. Maybe bringing activities together in one new facility, like curling, tennis, lawn bowling, bocci ball, pickleball, squash, racquetball, badminton, ping-pong, volleyball, and indoor soccer would make a lot of sense, and cost a lot less money than individually.

We have such a diversified city, so many people coming into our city, and wouldn't a Park housing all these activities be a beautiful attraction to our city, especially with the University enrollment growing to over 13,000 in the near future.

Submitted by Peter Pongrac

Dufferin Club of Brantford Chair Report 2017

It was another difficult year. The new by-laws were passed at last year's AGM and the board went from 14 to 7 directors; the Secretary position remained vacant all year. There were fewer people to do the same amount of work as in previous years. The board also knew the conditions of the greens and courts were not going to be the greatest, but we tried to make the best of it.

The board passed two more policies during the off-season. The first, a Key Holder Policy to ensure individuals with keys act responsibly and also make official what has been common practice for many years including the collection of keys at the end of the season. Second, a Light Use and Off-Season Light Use Policy to provide some general guidelines to using the lights and also to provide equal access to the lights for all members in October and November when the clubhouse is no longer staffed.

The club organized a number of events this year, starting with our second annual Spring Clean-up on Saturday, April 22. Fewer members came out than last year, but the group accomplished a lot. The clubhouse was cleaned inside and out, the men's washroom floor was repaired, the awning and benches were set up, debris was swept off the greens and courts, the grass cut, and dandelions pulled. Windscreens were all put up later in the season. The following Saturday, April 29 was our annual Open House. Turnout was low, due to the weather, but Dave Levac, MPP and Cheryl Antoski, Acting Mayor did swing by, which gave us an opportunity to talk to them about issues with the club.

For the second year in a row we offered free Give it a Try Sessions on Saturdays in May. One week was rained out, but more people came out than last year for the other sessions, particularly for lawn bowling. The Open House and Give it a Try Sessions were registered with the ParticipACTION 150 Play List. The Play List was a national program created to celebrate Canada's 150th birthday. The Dufferin Club was actually the only organization in Brantford and Brant County that promoted and participated in the Play List. It was disappointing the Play List was not promoted more in the city because it was a great program to try to encourage people to be more active and try new things.

The Cystic Fibrosis Charity Weekend was cancelled in July due to low registrations. Instead the club organized a Social Fundraiser for CF on Friday, August 25 which was well attended; around 50 people came out. There was a free BBQ and ice cream social with door prizes and a silent auction. Thanks to Pete Pongrac, Dave Cureatz and Lee Hendon for donating food; Lee for canvassing for prizes and promoting the event, and to members/businesses who donated prizes. The club raised a total of \$1,317 for CF, bringing the three-year tally to over \$5,100. There was also a Fall Bake Social in September, which had low participation, and a free Closing Dinner enjoyed by nearly 40 people prior to the AGM. Thank you Karen Jackson and Peter Pongrac for organizing the dinner.

The board proceeded with several major projects around the facility. The back of the clubhouse was given a facelift before our Open House, thanks to Robyn and Grant Ritchie. The grey and white paint looks fantastic and a big improvement over the old brown and green paint. The men's washroom floor was also refinished thanks to Peter Pongrac and Aldo Pignotta. Court 6 was repaired to improve safety and Courts 1 and 5 were repainted. Pete Pongrac and Dave Cureatz were contracted to do the work but Aldo Pignotta, Lee Hendon, Ian Davidson and Molly Anderson also pitched in to help.

St. Paul was under construction this summer. The Public Works Commission was able to work around the club's programs and did not start construction in front of the club until August 9. Noise, dust and the rough road was a bit of an inconvenience; driveway access was maintained during much of the construction but many members parked offsite and walked to the club to avoid the construction. Work is projected to be complete by the end of the year.

In terms of staffing this year, we did seek to hire both a senior and junior greenskeeper. Unfortunately, we had difficulty in finding anyone with experience to properly manage the green and train and supervise junior staff. We hired a student, Hunter Stenner, in May to cut the greens and do other maintenance around the club and continued to look for a senior greenskeeper. We eventually hired Ian Davidson to maintain the greens when the student funding ran out. We also hired Raina Ritchie, Jackson Adams, Porsha Taylor and Dima Lutayev as Court Staff and Junior Camp Instructors. Shasta Ritchie filled in on occasion. Dave Stewart continued as club pro and ran a very successful camp program.

The summer camp program was very successful this year with a total of 179 participants (compared to 169 in 2016). The camps were changed from four to five days and ran rain or shine; Subway brought in lunch on Fridays. Courts were quite busy in the mornings with the camps using three courts. The other three courts were always being used and often people were waiting to play.

This year, there were a total of 216 members, 197 for tennis and 19 for lawn bowling. Memberships were down from a total of 270 in 2016 for a number of reasons including health issues and increase in fees for lawn bowlers and conditions of the courts and greens. The board set one membership fee structure for all members, and membership included tennis, pickleball and lawn bowling. There were 90 registered guests that signed in and paid a drop-in fee; 74 for tennis and 16 for pickleball. There were a number of known unregistered guests as well, who come during unsupervised hours to play.

Other users of the facility included approximately 200 students from St. Johns and BCI for gym classes in the fall and spring and another 50 students from Dufferin Public School who used the courts three times in the fall. Around 120 students from four high schools used the courts for team practices after school in September and October in advance of the BCSSAA Junior and Senior Tennis Tournaments, which were held at the club in October. A total of six schools and 96 students participated in those tournaments.

Finally, and most importantly, Dufferin's current management agreement with the City of Brantford expires November 30. Parks and Recreation was not prepared to negotiate the contract and it was proposed that the city take over the management of the property at the end of the current management agreement. The Board unanimously agreed to proceed with this proposal and provided written notification of this in May upon realization that the club can no longer effectively manage the facility nor has the volunteers with the expertise and skills to properly manage the facility, particularly with regards to maintaining the lawn bowling greens and equipment, due to declining membership and revenues as a result of the accelerated deterioration of the facility. The club's future will be determined at the upcoming Estimates Committee meetings of the city. If council approves funding for Parks and Recreation to maintain and operate the facility in 2018, the club will still be able to run programming through a user/rental agreement with the city.

Andrea Hebb, Chair

Presentation
for AGM on Nov. 21, 2017
Summation of discussions with Brian Hughes
On Future of facility and new management agreement

My role: I joined a committee of three already in existence two years ago, at their request, to follow up quiet discussions that had already begun on the future of this club and its location – discussions with Brian Hughes. The other three members all disappeared and I was left as a committee of one. Subsequently Norm joined me and Andrea talked with us as well.

The past: Somehow, an anonymous person leaked to the Expositor the story that the club was going to move to the brownfields site on Pearl Street. That site became part of our discussions. We also were involved with discussions about changes to our legal contract with the City, since that contract is up at the end of its term: November 30, 2017. The executive of the Dufferin Club discussed what changes we would like to see, centering on getting the City to cover more of the costs and do more of the work around here. We began discussing the ideas with Brian Hughes last year and have continued into this fall, with others from the Club, three councillors, and a private citizen joining us. It became clear to Norm and me early on that our requests on individual items in the contract were not favoured and we really needed to talk about the whole relationship and having the City take over the property maintenance of the club, while the existing club and executive would continue to arrange for the play and use of the courts – so that activities would continue much as they have this year. Membership fees would be paid to the City. Work here would be done by City employees. There would still be camps, etc. Brian likes the idea of the Parks Board taking over the maintenance.

The present: In our recent meetings with Brian, we have been given copies of a proposal for the future of this facility and shown a rough site plan of what a facility would look like on the Pearl Street site (a conceptual plan only, which looks like it has been in existence for some time). The proposal offers two opposing ideas:

1. That our facility stay in this park but be rebuilt, with the baseball diamond removed and the actual components (courts, greens, playground equipment) moved around and probably some pickle ball courts added. Everything would be rebuilt, in all likelihood. The tennis group has already discussed this issue in the past and decided they would prefer to stay here on this site. Our current spot is in a central, visible location, with a history in this park and enough room for everything we want and even more in the future (perhaps badminton, pickle ball, indoor tennis).
2. That our facility be moved and rebuilt on another site, for example on Pearl Street, but not necessarily there; we briefly talked about Lions Park and Northridge Golf Course as well. If our facility were moved, then almost all of this park would be sold for housing to a developer, who would probably want to fit a lot of houses in here. The income from the sale would be used towards the cost of building our club. A very rough guess is that to rebuild what we have now might cost \$2 million (less than was spent on the North Park sport field).

The issues tonight: The first issue has basically been arranged; the Parks Board is prepared to take over the maintenance of the property as long as the City Council agrees to this proposal. They have the proposal before them and just have to vote on it as part of the budget process. Brian has estimated that the cost to the City next year might be about \$78,000.

The second issue is whether the Dufferin Club continues to exist – not the property and the sports, but the organization. That will only happen if a new executive takes over tonight. If that does not happen, then the executive will run through the steps to wind down the organization now.

The third issue in either case is how players continue to connect with the Parks Board. Even if there is no executive, we should have some designated people who stay in touch with the Parks Board and make recommendations. Volunteers would be needed right now.

The fourth issue is to stay aware of the rebuilding issue and apply pressure on the Parks Board and the City to do a rebuild.

Brian has talked about \$25,000 set aside for a site plan, but he won't release that money until WE decide where we want to be in the future. There is also \$275,000 nebulously set aside for improvements here on this site, but exactly where this money is no one seems to know.

It looks to me that no matter what organization we choose to follow here, that no rebuilding will occur for some time. Any plans in this regard have to be registered in the City of Brantford's budget.

Submitted by Mike Lewis