

Minutes of AGM - 2 December 2021 Held at the Shiplake Bowling Club

Committee members in attendance

Marcus Binning (MB) - Chair
Charlie Calderbank (CC) - Treasurer
Olly Bonser (OB) - Club Secretary
Karen Peters (KP) - Membership Secretary
Rachel Richardson (RR) - Juniors Secretary
Helma Marlow (HM) - Social Secretary

Apologies: Nick Wrigley - H&S Officer

Members in attendance

Quentin Jones, Diana Jones, Len Mitton, Janette Verrall, Julia Foskett, Penny Liddell, Katie Binning, Georgie O'Brien, Sandra Greenslade, Brenda Nearchou, John Church, Graham Cooper, George Brind

Apologies received from

Amanda Andrews, Sheena Darke, Mark Cranstoun, Jim Weatherston, Jane Sharples, Richard Ormorod, Peter Roberston, Sally Greenfield, Keith Greenfield, Tim Rose, Robin Roy

1. **Welcome** - OB opened the meeting and said how nice it was to be hosting the AGM in person rather than on zoom like last year's AGM.
2. **2021 Championship review, presentations and plans for 2022.**

KP provided an overview of this year's Championship which was as follows:

"Despite starting the year in another lockdown, we decided to go ahead with this year's Club Championships and 58 members entered the competitions. The online draw and results worked really well and despite competitors having to quarantine, contracting Covid and being injured the vast majority of matches were played by the deadline so many thanks from the Championships Committee as we really didn't have to chase too many people!"

Finals Day was a huge success and beautiful sunshine was enjoyed by all. There were some fantastic matches and the spectators appreciated the food and drink which was brilliantly organised by Nick (Wrigley).

Despite Tom Carey's very best efforts the Junior Champs didn't run smoothly due to several finalists dropping out last minute or their availability on the day being very

limited which necessitated many redrafts of the Order of Play. We'll be having a re-think for the 2022 Junior Champs.

Mike Lynskey was heard to suggest that we had an award for the member who had reached the most finals without winning any of them so I took that on board – here you are Mike!"

Trophies were then presented to those winners of the various categories who were in attendance.

A discussion was held regarding Championship plans for 2022, commencing with KP's thoughts:

"Thanks for all feedback from this year's entrants – we're minded to revert to a knockout competition for the Ladies singles and doubles and also men's singles and doubles next year. Will keep Mixed and Vets as leagues as they worked well this year. We're also keen to reintroduce the Plate competition. Please keep an eye out for emails about next year's Championships and make sure you enter. We'd love to see more newer members join in so anything you can do to persuade them would be appreciated."

The main concerns were: fixture congestion; court availability; and those who entered more than one event had many matches to organise.

Brenda commented that she had really enjoyed the league format for all events; a couple of other members agreed with her.

Janette found it very hard when players were allowed to play in the league stages, but they might not be able to make the finals day, which made it potentially awkward if playing in the doubles and then you or your partner weren't able to make finals day and therefore had to withdraw after qualifying from the group stage.

MB said that the Championship Committee would come up with a format which would appeal to the majority; he also asked for more feedback from other members on thoughts for next year's Championship format.

3. Chair's review

MB said that it had been a strange year, and he was still getting used to a role he had never before undertaken.

He thanked the following:

- Committee members for their help, support and patience
- Mike Lynskey for managing the Club session rota so effectively
- Tina Dalzell for furnishing the club grounds with pots and plants
- Richard Ormerod for ball monitoring and management
- Matt Thomas for managing all maintenance issues
- The Memorial Hall (our landlords) for being so obliging in a number of areas, including allowing us to use their bins
- Amanda Andrews for her work as Match Secretary
- All the team captains - Tim Rose, Richard Ormerod, Amanda Andrews, Janette Verrall, Karen Peters, Nikki Botterill, Sharon Hearn and Claire Pelling who have all done a great job managing the various teams
- All members for their loyalty and support of the Club - it's been a difficult couple of years and members' support is very appreciated

MB then outlined his aims and vision for the Club for 2022 which revolved around three key areas: integrity (eg personal, data, social), transparency (eg decision-making, court bookings) and competition (we play tennis to compete and we need to support our teams/team captains).

MB mentioned one of the main highlights of the year as being the clubhouse repairs, re-painting and new decking area. He gave thanks to Steve Berger for conducting surveys and providing plans for what needed doing. Many members provided help at all stages of the works. MB singles out two individuals who went above and beyond in their efforts and workload:

- Nick Wrigley - who put in more work and effort than almost anyone (a round of applause was given in appreciation).
- Pete Roberston - who put in a tremendous amount of time and effort, not only for the clubhouse project, but in so many other areas of the club throughout the year. MB showed a plaque which had been made up for Pete as a token of the Club's gratitude (a round of applause was given to Pete)

Despite covid, a few social gatherings had been organised, including two successful "bring and share" suppers at the club on Friday nights, and there was also the upcoming Christmas Party which Helma and her team were currently organising.

Ideas for 2022 were still being discussed, but generally a clean up of the grounds was required, fence painting, improvements inside the clubhouse, etc..help from the members for these kind of projects will be required, so MB asked that members do volunteer when needed. MB also mentioned that some members had mentioned they would be interested in committee roles, but just not at the present time.

4. Treasurer's report

CC circulated the audited accounts for the year. He highlighted a few key points, including:

- Subscription revenue has increased in 2021 from the previous year; this was mainly due to a return to play after lockdowns were lifted at the end of 2020, and members rejoined.
- There was an increase in costs relating to balls, equipment and maintenance - again this was put down to an increase in play, matches etc from the previous year.
- Our cash balance is up from c.£25,000 to c.£30,000
- CC confirmed that we now have a separate bank account which is ring fenced for large capital projects. The LTA has previously advised that we should put £5,400 in this account each year which will cover the cost of big ticket items (eg flood lights, courts, etc)

Sandra asked about coaching and why revenue from coaching is down on previous years. RR thought that this may have been a result of the weather and the refund policy for cancellations.

John asked whether the Club prepares a full budget each year. CC replied that it doesn't, but from experience the Club knows approximate revenues and outgoings, and therefore what is available to spend on ad hoc projects (e.g. clubhouse repairs and new decking from this year).

Peter Greenslade (our current auditor) had kindly agreed to be the Club's auditor again in 2022. A gift of thanks was given to Sandra to pass on to Peter.

5. Fee proposals for 2022

Various proposals regarding 2022 subscription levels were put forward. These were all voted on and approved:

- Adult membership annual subscription to increase by £15 to £125; however, should members renew before 31 January 2022, the subscription would remain at £110 p.a.
- A joining fee for new adult members would be implemented; this would be a one-off payment equivalent to one full year's adult membership subscription: £125.
- Junior membership subscription would be increased to £50; however, should junior members renew before 31 January 2022, the fee would remain at £40 for the year.

- Social memberships would no longer be available to new members; existing social members would be able to renew, but there would be no entry to the Wimbledon ballot for social members.

Other discussions around this topic included:

Can people join half way through the year on a pro rata basis? No - new members would need to pay the full joining fee and full subscription regardless of when in the year they joined.

What is the membership capacity? LTA guidelines say that there should be 60 members per court, so in theory we should have no more than 180 members (we currently have c.260), but this would make it unsustainable for the club. We do not have members complaining about courts being limited and not being able to play so we still have capacity for more members.

How does the Club monitor playing visitors and how does it monitor whether people are paying for their guests? Currently visitors should not play more than 3 times in any one calendar year, and visitors should pay £5 per visit. There were concerns that non-members were using the club (sometimes frequently) without paying. Members should feel free to challenge anyone they don't know about who they are and who they are playing with. If members feel that other members are bringing guests to the club and not logging their details in the visitors book and/or not paying for their guests, they should contact one of the Committee and raise it with them.

Graham asked about shoe tags being the best way to identify members, but many members don't wear the shoe tags anyway. The committee had decided to not use shoe tags any longer as the whole process was very time consuming.

How do other clubs of similar size to ours actually monitor guests? No one was sure, but OB said he would ask the tennis club volunteers' facebook group and report back.

Q suggested that a simple email should go out to the members explaining the rules about playing guests.

Q also asked whether members could pay for their guests on the website when booking their court. MB said he would look into that option.

6. Rule variations

Discussions were had on several proposed rule changes which were as follows:

1. Rule 5: Clarification of when new committee members took over the role; the Committee had proposed that the start date should be 1 January following the AGM; this was met with an objection from Sandra who argued that committee members

should take over the role from the relevant outgoing member immediately following the AGM (ie at 00:01 the following day) as was always the way in the past. The committee tried to explain that this wasn't always practical as handovers were needed, minutes needed to be written, signatories needed to be added to bank accounts etc etc. The motion to have the commencement date of January 1 was not approved by those present; an amended version was proposed which was that the commencement should be at 00:01 the day following the AGM. A majority approved this amendment and therefore the motion was carried.

2. Rule 6: Deleting "in order": motion carried
3. Rule 7: Members no longer have to resign in writing - motion carried
4. Rule 13: Mention of shoe tags being discontinued - motion carried, but with a slight amendment to the proposed wording, changing the word "member" to "individual"
5. Rule 17: motion carried, but with slight amendment to proposed wording: "at their sole discretion" to be added; and also mention of play being potentially detrimental to the courts during adverse weather conditions

7. Team reports

Ladies team report provided by KP:

The OLTA and Berkshire winter leagues 2020/21 were sadly curtailed by lockdown – a few matches were played by the OLTA A, B and C teams and the Berks 1 (Sharon Hearn) and 2 (Amanda Andrews) but all matches were cancelled before Christmas and the leagues sadly didn't resume in 2021.

In the summer, Nikki Botterill captained the OLTA Shiplake team, taking over from Janette Verrall who did a great job for many years. Nikki led her team to victory in 6 out of 7 matches and ended the season top of the table with 45 points! Not only that, but Nikki and daughter Lottie were ranked first and second in the player statistics for Division 4, no mean achievement! Well done them.

In the Berkshire summer league, the A team was captained by Sharon Hearn and played in Division 6. The standard was high and they finished towards the bottom of the division. The B team, captained by Amanda Andrews, fared better and finished mid-table in Division 7.

The OLTA winter league started in September with the A team in Division 1 (Nikki Botterill and Claire Pelling), B team in Division 3 (Janette Verrall and Karen Peters) and the C team in Division 4 (Amanda Andrews). Both the Bs and Cs are finding their new divisions a challenge and are hoping for better results in future matches! The As are doing better so the other teams may be looking to them for some coaching!

The Berks winter league 2021/22 team is again captained by Sharon and plays in Division 6 – they've played and lost two matches so we wish them all the best for better results in the rest of the competition.

Ladies team tennis is thriving at Shiplake and we've had several recent new recruits to the teams including some really promising juniors.

Men's B-team report provided by Richard Ormorod (read by MB):

Winter 2020/21 [Oxfordshire Division 5 of 7. 27-Sep-20 to 18-Apr-21]

The league was started, but abandoned in December-20 due to Lockdown #2

Played 4 of 9 matches and were sitting 6 of 10.

Used 13 players. Andy Stallwood & Dave Barlow played the most and they were also the best players

Summer 2021 [Berkshire Division 8 of 8. 17-Apr-21 to 14-Aug-21]

Finished 3 out of 7.

Used 14 players. Mark Rodick, Jim Weatherston & Tim Greene played the most and they were also best players

Winter 2021/22 [Oxfordshire Division 5 of 7. 3-Oct-21 to 26-Feb-22]

Currently 7 of 10 after 4 matches of 9

Used 11 players. Jim & John Church played the most. Too early to have player success ranking

Men's A team

No report provided about the team's performance in the various leagues, but OB did relay information from Tim Rose that Tim was finding it increasingly difficult to assemble a team for each match, and that we had sent just a single pair on two occasions. If we do this a third time, we may be expelled from the league altogether. Last week Tim had contacted 25 people and was still not able to put out a full team. Tim wondered whether we may have to just have one men's team going forward.

Discussion was held on this topic: why were we struggling to find players: other commitments; injuries; other sports; family commitments; and distance/time to north Oxford for away games were all possible and very valid reasons.

Janette mentioned that she had attended a meeting many years ago where they considered splitting the Oxford league into two leagues - one for the north and one for the south due to the fact that Oxfordshire is a very long county and to travel from top to bottom or bottom to top takes a long time. Splitting the league into two did not happen, but Janette asked if we could approach Oxford LTA and see if this could be re-considered, and also introducing home and away fixtures against the same team in a season. OB said that he had a very useful contact at OLTA and that he would speak to him.

Did other clubs have the same issues? Henley tennis club had said that they get requests from members to play for the teams, rather than the captain having to call players.

Q asked whether we should send an email to members asking them to better support the teams.

8. Committee resignations and elections

CC and HM were both standing down after three years service on the Committee. They were both presented with a gift and words of thanks from Marcus, and a round of applause followed.

Committee elections were then held with the following people being proposed, seconded and elected to the Committee:

Chair: Marcus Binning; proposed by OB and seconded by Q
Treasurer: Jane Sharples; proposed by MB and seconded by Sandra
Secretary: Olly Bonser; proposed by KP and seconded by Janette
Membership Secretary: Karen Peterson; proposed by OB and seconded by Penny Liddell
Juniors Secretary: Rachel Richardson; proposed by Sandra and seconded by Diana
Social Secretary: Robin Roy; proposed by HM and seconded by Diana
H&S Officer: Nick Wrigley; proposed by OB and seconded by Sandra
Committee Member: John Church; proposed by Dianne and seconded by Sandra

9. Website

MB explained that the old website was old, expensive and not very functional for a tennis club in terms of court bookings, membership renewals and updating content. The new site is much better in all these areas.

MB gave a demonstration of the new site which is now up and running. In particular he showed how to book a court and also how to contact key members of the club via the site.

Janette felt that people able to book slots of two hours was too much; there was general agreement and MB will adjust this on the site.

Team captains will be encouraged to create short reports after each match and try to get more interest around men's matches and teams.

Sandra noticed that nowhere on the site did it mention coaching - a key component in remaining competitive. Sandra asked for the coaching at Shiplake to be reviewed as there wasn't any provision for adult coaching. MB said that this would be reviewed.

Going forward we will not be using the services of David Bell as our website contractor; we are all very grateful for the many years of help and support provided by David.

MB stressed that we do need input and ideas from members; so can members have a play with the site and provide feedback.

Sandra expressed thanks to Marcus for the huge IT and website developments and enhancements over the last year.

10. Most improved player award

This was awarded to Lottie Botterill; Lottie wasn't present at the AGM, but she had sent a message of thanks for the award.

11. The Jones Shield

This award, decided by Q and Diana Jones, and given to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the club over the last 12 months, was this year given to Peter Roberston for all his tireless work around the club.

12. AOB

Janette mentioned that in a recent match (played under floodlights), one of her opponents was completely dazzled by the central floodlights when she was playing on Court 1. MB thought that the tower may have been moved by the recent storms, so he would look into it.

Janette asked whether the screen could go back up on Court 2 which helps block out any distractions along the fence and which also helps reduce the wind coming across the playing field. MB wasn't sure why the screen had been taken down in the first place, but would look at putting it back up.

There being no further business, the meeting ended.