

Minutes of Committee Meeting – 12 January 2021

Present: Marcus Binning (MB) – Chair Charlie Calderbank (CC) – Treasurer Rachel Richardson (RR) – Junior Secretary Karen Peters (KP) – Membership Secretary Helma Marlow (HM) – Social Secretary Olly Bonser (OB) – Secretary Nick Wrigley (NW) – H&S Officer

1. Matters arising from the previous meeting

- Most actions had been dealt with. Updates below:

- CC had spoken to Paul Bodman regarding the trees, and Paul's son had started cutting where needed. CC to send him the new code so the son can access the club grounds

- Members and their guests: KP had sent invoices to members who had brought guests to the club. It was noted that several members seemed to be abusing the honesty system. KP to include a note in the membership renewal letter to highlight the importance of signing guests in and paying for them.

- NW to speak to Peter Robertson about fixing the gate on Court 3 (side gate) – still needs to be fixed.

- Shiplake College paying an increased £12.00 per court per hour (NW).

- NW now dealing with recycling balls. Issue with people putting rubbish in the ball recycling bin. MB to create signage

2. Membership Renewal Status

- At close of 2020, there were:
 - o 162 adult members

 - o 106 junior members

 - o 8 social members

 - o 3 honorary members

- KP to send renewal reminders via email to those who had not renewed their membership. It was acknowledged that renewing membership when unable to use the club facilities wasn't ideal, but it was agreed that we should proceed with the renewals now and not delay. Also no need for further incentivisation by extending the discount period beyond January.

– For new members, there would be no joining fee until Easter Monday. For new member enquiries we should highlight that we have a club which will always open when safe to do so, and that we were able to host our Club Championships in last year, despite the various lockdown and restrictions which took place throughout the year.

– Ideas to recruit new members when the club re-opened: boost presence in Shiplake and Binfield Heath newsletters; boost presence in Shiplake College and Shiplake Primary School newsletters; look into having banners at the T-junction of Reading Road and Memorial Avenue to raise awareness of the Club and membership availability

3. Treasurer's Report

– The Club currently has a surplus of £23,799 which includes: £16,218 in the 32-day sink fund account; £1,333 in the main account; £5,304 in the paypal account; and £943 in the sports and social account

– This leaves the Club in a healthy financial position, despite membership numbers being down

– We are also ahead of target for the 32-day sink fund account by one year (this is the LTA recommended account to ensure future financial provision for courts, nets, floodlights to be repaired/replaced

– MB asked how much we have spare for extraordinary items, such as significant maintenance requirements to the clubhouse. CC replied that we have £3-4k for that kind of item. MB stressed the importance of getting people to renew and join.

– The clubhouse is in need of some repairs. NW would speak to Matt Thomas and Pete Roberston and get a couple of quotes for repairs and move the project along.

– Also discussed was the loo cubicle and whether the walls needed to be covered to make it easier to clean. This would be discussed with the companies with whom we discuss the clubhouse repairs

4. Junior Matters

– Not much going on. RR has had to make some junior coaching refunds due to the lockdown cancellations.

– Numbers were looking ok for coaching, but similar story that the numbers are very good for the younger juniors, but they soon start dropping off when they start other activities on a Saturday morning (eg football)

5. Social Events

– Due to current lockdown, no events are possible. It was felt that people wouldn't want to do anything over zoom

– HM ready and keen to start organising social events as soon as restrictions permit. Lots of ideas, but just need to wait and see what we can and can't do per government/LTA guidance (eg would be good to host and promote a big Sunday Morning re-opening session)

6. Current status of dispute with Neighbour

– CC provided background and history on the dispute.

– Current situation is that we are waiting to hear from his solicitor, but since David Channon (former STSC Secretary) found an Agreement concluding the same issue from last time, and signed by the neighbour several years ago, we do not expect to hear back any time soon.

7. Health & Safety

– NW confirmed that the club was now closed and is fully compliant with LTA regulations

– NW highlighted that a nationwide petition had been set up to encourage the government to allow tennis as an acceptable form of socially distanced exercise. The committee decided that we would not actively promote this petition and thereby risk being seen as 'political'

– NW also highlighted that there was a 'Tennis at Home Club', promoting the playing of tennis at home, in gardens, etc..It was agreed that we should promote this and it would be added to the website

– Defibrillator – a member has noticed that it was saying the battery was flat. NW was made aware and, having spoken to the manufacturer, has now sorted the issue out (the battery was working, but for some reason it was saying it wasn't); the member has been updated with this news.

– Shiplake College – the students don't QR code in when they play, but the master in charge of tennis maintains a list of who plays each week, so the information is available if needed for any covid-related reason.

8. MB's Chair orientation and new ideas

– MB asked if there was a comprehensive list of everyone who had official roles at the club in any capacity. It didn't appear that there was. It was agreed that there should be one written down and held somewhere for all Committee members to access as and when required. OB to assist

– MB also suggested the use of google docs to improve the effectiveness of communication between the Committee members and also as a way of having all information stored centrally and safely.

Everyone agreed that we'd be happy to give that a go – we could store all the information which is currently either stored in peoples' heads or on their PCs

– In particular MB demonstrated a spreadsheet tracker, monitoring the progress and updates of any ongoing issues. It was agreed that after each Committee meeting, the Committee would decide what new issues (if any) should be added to the tracker. This would be helpful for both the current Committee, but also for future Committees when looking back on longstanding issues.

– We need to start transferring documents to the STSC google drive and organise with folders – area in MB's Google drive has been shared and many documents moved over. The Committee has access to this area.

9. AOB

– Website – several issues were raised with the existing website: functionality, ease of finding information ((navigation) keeping things up to date; block booking courts; sending emails to members if needed urgently, etc.. MB, CC and KP agreed to look at this in more detail and come back with some ideas/proposals.

– Club Constitution: a few issues: there seemed to be some confusion regarding the Constitution, bye-laws, rules, Club Charter, etc and was there a formal written copy of these, other than on the website? Also, whether the Committee has the power to change the constitution (eg confirming when the role of a new Committee member goes live (eg is it with immediate effect when they are voted in at the AGM, or is it on the 1 January?)), or does it need a full Club vote to make any changes? All Committee Members agreed to check all their Club records/notes/files and see if any information could be found.

– MB would simplify the QR code for signing in to the club, so rather than having one code for members and the other for guests, there would be one code on display around the club grounds.

– RR mentioned that Club Policies need updating. It was noticed that all Committee Members needed to confirm in writing that they had read and understood the various policies. Committee members agreed to do this.

– Visitor Fees: MB initiated a discussion on visitor fees and the frequency of which they could play. At present non-members were able to play at the Club three times each year (and pay the guest fee). MB suggested a new system which allowed members to pay a lump sum and then guests could play more than three time. No decision was made, so it was agreed that we would discuss again in due course.

– MB confirmed that he had spoken to the Championship Committee from 2020 and it looked like most would be happy to be on the Committee again for next year.

– It was noted that a few Club contact details were incorrect on the Shiplake newsletter. KP would get this changed

ACTIONS

1. CC to provide Paul Bodman's son with the new code
2. KP to send reminder email to those who had not yet renewed
3. KP to include information about members needing to record when guests play at the club and that they will need to pay a guest fee.
4. NW to speak to Peter Robertson about the Court 3 gate
5. MB to create signage for the ball recycling bin
6. KP to investigate banners to promote the club (on T-junction), and other ways to promote membership availability
7. NW to look at Clubhouse repair with Matt and Pete
8. NW to consider promotion of "Tennis at Home" on the website and where this might go
9. OB and MB to create definitive list of roles and accountability
10. ALL to start using the tracker sheet and also start moving information (eg minutes of previous meetings, policies, legal correspondence, etc) to google docs
11. MB, CC and KP to look at website improvements
12. ALL to review their club files/documents to identify any information on our constitution, bye-laws, rules and Charter
13. MB to simplify the QR code sign-ins
14. ALL to review all policies and sign the document confirming that these have been read
15. KP to amend contact details on Shiplake newsletter

Date of next meeting:

– Tuesday 9 March 2021 at 7.30pm

– Location TBC