



Minutes of AGM – 29 March 2023
Held at Shiplake Bowling Club

Present:

Committee:

Marcus Binning (MB) – Chair, Jane Sharples (JS) – Treasurer, Jenny Berger (JB) – Secretary, Karen Peters (KP) - Membership Secretary, Rachel Richardson (RR) - Committee Member, Nick Wrigley (NW) – H&S Officer, Chris Ovenden – Head Coach (HC),

Members:

Len Mitten, Dave Vaughan (Coach), Kevin James, Steve Berger, Helma Marlow, Graham Cooper, Georgie O'Brien, Linda Malden, Fiona Jennings, Q. Jones, Diana Jones, Katie Binning, Sandra Greenslade, Peter Robertson.

Apologies:

John Church, Janette Verrall, Amanda Andrews, Nikki Botterill, Olly Bonser, Brenda Nearchou, Caroline Edwards, Sharon Hearn, Richard Omerod, Sally and Keith Greenfield, Julia Foscett

1. Introduction and matters arising from previous meeting

MB welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Minutes from the AGM held on 2nd December 2021 were approved by the meeting with no matters arising.

2. Chairpersons Summary of the year

MB thanked all the members who volunteer and help with the running of the Club: the Committee: the Team Captains (Matt Thomas and Andy Stallwood, Richard Ormerod who is also Fixture Secretary, Amanda Andrews who is also Match Secretary, Janette Verrall, Karen Peters, Nikki Botterill, Sharon Hearn), Tina Dalzell for the pots and plants,

MB described the year as having been one of changes and challenges, with many long-standing members leaving the Club and new people joining. He reiterated the values of the Club were integrity, friendliness and competitive tennis for all levels

He paid tribute to Tim Rose, the previous Head Coach, who had been with the Club for 22 years. He recognised the valuable service Tim had given to the Club over that time and thanked him for coaching so many of our juniors. He offered a formal vote of thanks on behalf of the Club which was recognised through a round of applause.

He welcomed the new Head Coach Chris Ovenden and Assistant Coach Dave Vaughan. He said the decision had been made to change coaches in response to demand from members. A survey

to all members carried out in 2022 had identified 30% of the then current Adult membership wanted adult coaching which was not being offered. The Teams sought to become more competitive and wanted coaching which was not available to them. The adults and junior membership numbers have been declining. Adult members were joining alternative Clubs to get coaching and 23 juniors from Shiplake primary school had joined Peppard to attend coaching there. It is anticipated the new coaching arrangements will satisfy this need and attract new adult and junior members.

The new coaching operates in a different way to the previous setup. The coaching sessions and all the junior coaching is now organised and managed by CO Tennis – which has relieved the Committee from a large chunk of time consuming and often frustrating work. There has been a lot of enthusiasm of take up for the new coaching offering and this has increased court usage.

MB said there had been some experimentation with the new activities but the Committee had listened to feedback from Members and adjustments to the use of courts was being made. In the future Club Sessions will not be impacted by block booking of courts for coaching or other activities. Wherever possible at all other times, one court will be available for booking and play by members -the exceptions being Saturday mornings when 3 courts will be used for Group coaching until 1100, and a previous arrangement with Shiplake College for the use of 3 courts on Wednesday at 1530-1630.

In reviewing activities during the year MB recognised the tournament organised by Mark Cranston (MC) –‘Sip and Swing’ had been very popular -thanks to MC for organising. In addition the end of year dinner in November had been a resounding success.

MB outlined key areas of work that the Committee had undertaken over the year:

- i) **The website** – the Club had been using the LTA ClubSpark software but there had been ongoing major difficulties and frustrations with the system. The decision was taken to re-instate David Bell (DB) to rebuild the website. DB maintains the functionality of the system and the Club controls the content. The results to date have been excellent. Memberships, and payments can now be made online, providing more accurate and up to date information on numbers.
- ii) **Court bookings** can now be made online and members can view live bookings to see if courts are free. This is providing useful data to enable court usage to be monitored.
- iii) **Club clothing.** Thanks to KP and a number of other members, notably Fiona Jennings, the Club has a new logo and a range of clothing is available through an online shop. No investment in stock is required and the Club is relieved from any overhead in managing this.
- iv) **Electricity costs** have risen dramatically. A Special General Meeting (SGM) was held on November 22nd where the issues were outlined to members. The Chairman thanks the Members for their interest and attendance at that meeting. Members agreed to increase the Membership fees to cover these costs. The Committee agreed to investigate LED lighting to try and reduce future electricity use. Budget quotes had been received but these were in excess of £20,000 and the Club does not have the money available to do this at the time being, this project is therefore on hold until the Club reserves have been built back up.

3. Treasurer's report

JS issued a summary of the accounts which have been approved by Peter Greenslade, the Appointed auditor. The detailed reports are provided in the Appendix.

JS explained the accounts covered a 14 month period from 01.11.21 -31.12.22 to align the Club financial year with the Membership year. Future accounts will show 12 months.

In summary there was a deficit of £12,774 and an overall cash gain of £1,302 for the period .

- Subscription income was £21,563 and remained in line with the average over the previous 5 years. However, this was due to increased membership fees as membership numbers have declined to 242 in the current year from the previous highs of 356 and 352 in 2016 and 2017 respectively.

- Coaching had resulted in a net loss of £922 for the period.

- Major expenditure included increased electricity costs which reflect escalating global energy prices. Although actual cash payments for the period were relatively normal these underestimate true costs and an accrual of £5k has been taken into the next period to account for underbilling. Electricity costs are anticipated to remain elevated through 2023 at c. £5k in addition to the accrual for 2022.

Essential rebuilding of the website had required a one-off investment of ~ £6,000, but ongoing maintenance costs will be significantly lower.

Balls, equipment and maintenance have cost ~£8,500.

JS described the outlook for 2023 as challenging but optimistic, based on estimates of membership, costs and expenditure a net gain of ~£12,000 is projected. The new coaching set-up with CO aims to generate revenue and bring in new members. Attracting new members is highly important if increases in current membership costs are to be avoided.

Peter Greenslade was proposed and approved by all present as the Auditor (Proposer S. Greenslade, Seconded K.Peters)

Questions on the Treasurers Report:

Visitors: Q asked why there was £0 income from visitors' fees. JS explained the money had not been collected in time for the end of the Accounting year- so it was being carried forward to next year and would be around £250.

There was a discussion about the difficulties of monitoring visitors and collecting visitors fees.

All members are responsible for signing in the visitors they bring and for paying their fees but often this is not happening.

It was agreed that more should be done to try and register visitors and collect their fees.

Options to be investigated include - members to purchase a visitor pass online at the time of booking the court - MB to investigate.

More visible signage to be put around the Club to remind members/visitors to sign in.

Visitors book to be made more visible.

Committee and other willing members to introduce themselves in a friendly way to new 'faces' and offer a friendly reminder to fill in the visitor's book.

Options for paying by Monthly Direct Debit: Georgie asked if this was possible.

JS/KP replied yes this was theoretically possible but it would take considerably more administration to operate and could not be handled by the current Committee.

Reasons for membership decline were discussed – reasons included; post COVID effect; injuries and ageing of some of the long standing members; change in Wimbledon ballot rules meant Wimbledon tickets were no longer an incentive; lack of coaching for juniors meant families were joining other Clubs.

4. Membership Secretary's Report

KP provided the following data on membership upto 27th March 2023:
217 Total Members of the Club
129 Adults, 67 Juniors, 14 students and 7 complimentary.

To date, since starting at the Club in January, CO has introduced 3 fully enrolled adult members, 5 in the process of joining and 16 juniors.

The new website has worked brilliantly for joining this year with a very small number of queries from members, this is stark contrast to last year when the renewal process through ClubSpark was fraught with difficulties.

The joining fee for new members is currently suspended to try and attract more people. This will be kept under review by the Committee.

5. Club Teams' Report

The Club has six teams in the Summer leagues and five teams in the Winter leagues. KP read out a summary of all the Reports provided by the Team Captains – full report available in the Appendix.

6. Head Coach's report (CO)

CO thanked everyone at the Club for their warm welcome and said how much they had enjoyed their first three months. He reiterated their aim was to provide coaching for all standards of play, to build up the junior membership and activity and to assist the Club in attracting new members. The coaching team have brought with them members from other clubs, some have joined already others plan to join Shiplake when their membership year at their existing clubs expire - typically this is April.

He described some of the coaching activities which are currently underway:

- Junior coaching covers all age groups and abilities. Sessions run after school and on Saturday morning. Coaching programme currently has 46 juniors and 15 adults.
- Junior tennis camps will run during the holidays.
- Rusty rackets session is open to all adults on Saturday mornings from 10-11am.
- Ladies team players have arranged private small group coaching sessions.
- Private lessons are proving popular with members.
- CO will run the Junior Club championships. In the summer and have entered the Club in the tournament 'Play your way to Wimbledon'.

School Links – the CO team have met with Shiplake Primary School and Shiplake College to strengthen links with the local community.

CO will be running after school tennis with the primary school but many pupils currently attend Peppard for coaching so converting these to members at STSC will take time.

Questions about coaching:

Q asked about the arrangements for non-members taking coaching and their contribution to the Club. CO and MB explained all coaching activities pay a fee to the Club for the usage of all courts and the floodlights In addition non-members pay a visitors fee. CO provides information on joining the Club to all non-members and encourages them to join STSC.

The usage by non-members is being monitored by CO and the Committee - if the coaching or courts become dominated by non-members a limit will be placed on the number of times a player can have coaching without joining. It is too early to assess this yet -although the majority of coaching is currently taken up by STSC members.

Increasing PR activity with Henley Standard was suggested as a useful tool to attract more members -this will be progressed by CO and the Committee.

7. Committee Roles – Farewells and election of 2023 Committee:

MB thanked the following Committee members for all their hard work, and who have retired this year, but especially Rachel Richardson for her tireless work as Junior Secretary.

Nick Wrigley (Health and Safety), Olly Bonser (club Secretary), Robin Roy (Social Secretary).

Thanks also to Nick for organising the collection and recycling of old tennis balls- raising £112.50. NW and OB were asked to nominate one charity each, to which the Club would donate the money raised from the ball recycling.

The following nominations for Committee roles were proposed and seconded. Each proposal was voted on and received a majority support. The roles of Social secretary and H&S officer remain vacant.

Role	Name	Nominated by	Seconded
Chairperson	Marcus Binning	Karen Peters	Jenny Berger
Treasurer	Jane Sharples	Marcus Binning	John Church
Club Secretary	Jenny Berger	Sandra Greenslade	Caroline Edwards
Membership	Karen Peters	Janette Verrall	Julia Foskett
Social Secretary			

Health and Safety			
Member w/o portfolio	John Church	Jenny Berger	Nicholas Wrigley
Member w/o portfolio	Rachel Richardson	Steve Berger	Jane Sharples

Sandra proposed a vote of thanks to the Committee for their outstanding work.

8. A.O.B.

Di Jones on behalf of Amanda Andrews asked if, in order to help the Club finances, the reimbursement of monies for the snacks provided by members running Club sessions could be scrapped -ie the session co-ordinator would provide the snacks as a goodwill gesture. JS and KP said only a small proportion of members actually reclaimed the money and the cost to the Club was around £250 last year. Not everyone runs a Club session and it was feared asking people to provide snacks at their own cost might put people off, making it harder to run the sessions. Not everyone supports providing food at all. A vote was held:

10 votes - In favour of retaining the existing system- (Club session organiser provides snacks and can reclaim the money)

3 votes – In favour of session co-ordinator providing snacks at their own expense

8 - abstentions

The meeting closed at 21:18 pm.