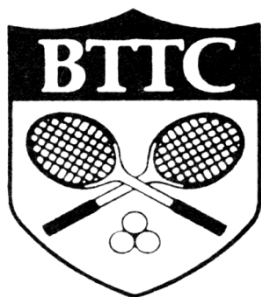


BEARSTED & THURNHAM LAWN TENNIS CLUB



MINUTES OF THE THIRTY-FOURTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT 2.00PM ON SUNDAY 16th OCTOBER 2011 IN THE CLUBHOUSE

PRESENT:

David Johnson
William Thackwell
Cathy Hoskins
Janet Perrett
Kim Martin
Alan Wilkins
Elizabeth Laurent
Pauline Johnson
Jo Mullner
And 34 Club Members

President
Chairman
Vice Chairman
Secretary
Treasurer
Club Captain
Membership Secretary
Social & Events Member
Bar Member

APOLOGIES:

Paul Duckworth
Nick & Debbie Dale
Phil Stocker
Jodie Thackwell
Carol Buse
Tony & Leslie Goodair
Pam Thomas
Myra Hunter
Mary Cannon
Sarah Thomas
Ann Duckworth
Gina Milne

1. WELCOME

The meeting commenced at 2.05pm with the Club President introducing himself and the members of the Management Committee. He welcomed members to the 34th AGM and said it was good to see so many members present.

The President then paid tribute to Alan Ferrell who recently passed away by saying:

“Alan was taken seriously ill in France, and after many weeks in hospital in France was transferred to Maidstone Hospital but sadly died nearly two weeks ago. Our thoughts are with his sons Nick and Matt and their families.

Alan was a Founder member of the Club who with others had the vision to apply for and get permission many years ago to turn a piece of waste land and two building site huts into the tennis club and clubhouse that we have today. Of course there have been many upgrades over the years.

Alan was not only a Founder member as I have said, but also served the club as Founder Chairman, twice as President, and Membership Secretary. I'm sure you will join me in appreciation of Alan's contribution to Bearsted Tennis Club”

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from members named above.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST AGM

Minutes of the 33rd AGM were approved by those present as a true record of that meeting. Proposed by Pam Cooper and seconded by June Wilkins.

4. MATTERS ARISING

No matters arising other than those dealt with elsewhere in the minutes.

5. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I would like to start by thanking you all for turning out to attend our Annual General Meeting. How nice to see so many here enjoying their tennis in the sun this morning! I'm grateful to the Social Committee for laying on the nice lunch rolls today, as an added inducement to attend. May I also publicly thank David Johnson for accepting our invitation to become President of the club and welcome him to his first AGM in that role.

Membership of the club stands at a healthy **587**. 36 new members joined this year, including 18 juniors and 11 non-residents. The non-resident waiting list stands at 69. I can confirm that the Parish Council agreed our proposed change to the Constitution, as approved at last year's AGM, clarifying that Social Members do not count towards the 150 maximum number of non-resident members.

On other matters, Paul and Gary Duckworth have continued to develop and improve the club's new website. Club improvements include a new gas barbecue, which is easier to use than the traditional solid fuel range and this big screen television. This enables members to come and watch popular sporting events, such as the Rugby World Cup and draws more members in to use the club house.

The new front door has been installed by Laszlo. Our programme of court maintenance has continued with the cleaning and repainting of Court 1 and the insertion of a root barrier behind Courts 4 and 5. Subject to expert advice, we may need to fell the sycamore near this end of the club house, which is showing signs of decay.

To add to what our President has said about Alan Ferrell: his funeral will be this coming Friday the 21st October in Holy Cross Church. In light of his key input to our club, our club house will be used for the reception following the service.

As you are aware, this meeting is my last function as Chairman of the club. At the conclusion of it, the role of Chairman passes to Cathy Hoskins, who was voted in at last year's AGM. I remain on the committee for one year as Past Chairman, then a new Vice Chairman will be elected, as the cycle continues. It has been a privilege and pleasure to have served the club in this role for 2 years. I am very grateful to all the members of the management committee, who have given such excellent support in this time. We should all be grateful also to the tennis and social committees and everyone that has contributed in other ways, such as manning the bar. Without that input, things would not happen and the club would decline. Thank you all.

That concludes my address. I now hand over to Kim Martin, for his report as treasurer.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

The accounts, which were audited by Rod Hewson for the year ended 31st December 2010 were not presented to the meeting as they had been available to view on the website.

This year has been fairly inactive financially. The only major capital expense has been the TV - £685.00. Bar profits have increased from £1,033 to £1,623. The LTA loan for the floodlights has now been repaid. Due to the change in the way affiliation fees are now paid they have reduced from £5,792 to £1,250. Cash in the bank before paying for the cleaning and repainting of Court 1 and putting a root barrier behind courts 4 & 5, is £50,000. The estimated cost for the aforementioned work is £3,750.

7. CLUB CAPTAIN'S REPORT

TOURNAMENTS

League Representation.

Representation in the Kent, East Kent and the M&D Leagues remains much the same as last year where we had 25 teams participating in the summer of this year and 21 teams participating this winter.

My thanks go out once again to all the team captains for their organisation of their squads.

The team results during the year have been published progressively throughout the year in the January, May and September issues of the Newsletters.

In the past year our teams have gained the following honours.

Winter 2010/2011.

- **Ladies Vets 1.** They won division 2B of the Kent League and gained promotion to division 1. They contested but unfortunately did not win the divisional 2 title.
- **Ladies 60+.** They won this competition again. (Only one division).
- **Ladies M&D.** They won division 2 and gained promotion to division 1.

Summer 2011.

Men's 1. They won division 2 of the M&D League and gained promotion to division 1

Club Championship Tournament.

The finals took place this year on Saturday and Sunday 3 & 4 September 2011. The results were published in the September Newsletter and have been posted on the notice board. The weather on Saturday was fine and despite the vagaries of the weather on Sunday early afternoon we were still able to complete our finals weekend to programme and in good time to allow us to enjoy the good food and the presentation ceremony that followed. Before the presentation ceremony took place our President David Johnson thanked everyone who had participated and organised the finals weekend and for making it such a success. The presentation ceremony concluded with the most improved player awards which this year went to an ecstatic Jenny Poulter who won the senior award and an equally overjoyed Senaka Rupasinha who won the junior award.

Following a review of the 2011 Club Championship Tournament the Tennis Committee are considering holding the 2012 finals over 1.5 days with the intent of finishing play round about 1.00 p.m. with the BBQ/Presentation Ceremony to follow.

Racquet/Hubble & Freeman Demonstration Evening

This evening which had become an annual event was not held this year as unlike previous years the attendance by club members at the June 2010 event was not so good so as reported at the last AGM it was decided to give it a rest in 2011 and to consider reinstating a similar event in 2012.

Winter Singles Box League

This competition subject to demand will continue into its 12th year under the leadership of Richard Laurent.

Junior Tennis

Whilst a number of our juniors participated and did well in this year's Club Championship the lack of entry was disappointing.

Given that we have a goodly number of juniors currently receiving coaching at the club and within our membership the Tennis Committee will be looking at ways of stimulating interest, primarily through our coaches, to encourage juniors to enter the Club Championship and competitive tennis.

Alexander Chadwick, Josh & Gabby Chidwick, William Corbyn, Euan Doughty and Phoebe Watton have all been awarded their colours this year.

On 28 May 2011 we hosted an U15 International match, organized by Ian Payne, between Nicklas Gerdes from Ringstedt in Northern Germany and our own Jack Hipwood with Nicklas becoming the eventual winner of an exciting and well fought match.

Coaching

Coaching continues to be carried out by our coaches, Phil Stocker, Karen Thomas, Melvin Watts and Neil Buscombe.

The Coaches Reports will follow under a separate agenda item.

Social Tennis

- Social tennis has continued to be well supported throughout the summer on Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings. Wednesday winter social tennis started at the beginning of October and is currently fully subscribed ably organized by Susan Russell and supported by Hilda Matthews.
- A Start of Summer Season Mixed Doubles Tournament was held on 25 April 2011. The tournament winners this year were Tony Fitzpatrick (again) and Jenny King.
- Pam Cooper organised another Ladies Tournament on 26 July 2011 and the winners were Jenny Poulter and Vivienne Pearson. As usual the event was rounded off with an evening at The Black Horse in Thurnham.

Club Member's Achievements

Within the Newsletters this past year you will have seen reports of the achievements of some of our club members, too numerous to mention them all by name, in tournaments in and around the south east. Our congratulations go out to them all.

Fixtures Secretary.

At the last AGM I referred to our ongoing search for a Fixtures Secretary to support Neil Buscombe and that discussions were underway at that time with Gary Duckworth to take over the role of organizing the M&D fixtures.

I am pleased to say that our fixtures are now in the safe hands of the dynamic duo of Neil & Gary.

In conclusion my personal thanks goes out to the Tennis Committee with an extra special thanks to Pam Cooper who has decided to stand down after very many years as Ladies Captain handing over this mantle to Celia Pascoe who has agreed to join the Tennis Committee in this capacity.

My thanks go to the Management & Social Committees and all those other club members who have supported us in our endeavours during the past twelve months.

Questions:

Michael Laurenson raised the subject of the organization of the Club Championship Junior Tournament round robin events that took place in July this year. Alan Wilkins explained that the circumstances surrounding the organization of these events, in particular, the doubles events was fully discussed at a subsequent meeting where it was concluded steps would be taken next year to ensure there was no reoccurrence. Michael Laurenson felt sure that if required parents of some of the juniors involved would assist in the organization if required.

The President thanked Alan Wilkins for time spent on Club Captain's work.

8. CLUB COACHES' REPORTS

Annual Report by Neil Buscombe:

What a year it has been for coaching. It has been rare to get two weeks, one after the other, where squads have not had to be abandoned because of bad weather.

Last winter started well with most squads full but inevitably I end up with children leaving for a variety of reasons. The continuation rate was good and there was a significant level of progress in spite of the weather.

At the end of the winter season I held a 'small' tournament for Under 12 players, I was disappointed to find that there were no entries from any of the Maidstone and District clubs but the Penenden Heath set up provided nearly 30 players which took me over the totals that I had expected. The U10 and U12 girl's events were both won by club players while the boys had 5 of the last eight in both age groups. It was a great learning experience for them and the quality of tennis improved considerably during the afternoon. I know that some older members came up to play on that day, took one look at the organised chaos and went away again. My apologies for the inconvenience and my thanks for allowing the event to continue unhindered.

With the start of the summer some new players joined me and must have liked it because they have come back again after the holiday break.

In July I was able to enter 5 of my older players for 'Club Colours' and all of them acquitted themselves well enough to be accepted. Given a little extra coaching and experience I look forward to seeing them in club teams in the future.

For the 5th year the Activity Fair was run on the Village Green. More activities than ever turned up but it was still our small court that always had a queue of children waiting to try their ball skills. What a pity we have no indoor facility as the number of very young people wanting to play was large. This activity is one that has shown the club in good light to the community and a number of people have made enquiries as a result of seeing us there. The Community Warden who runs the event is moving on so it is to be hoped that the event will continue.

As this academic year starts all my squads are full and I have been able to pass on the names of other coaches to people making enquiries. I hope they have made the phone calls because the more players we get the stronger the club becomes and involving junior players is essential to the club's future.

The President thanked Neil Buscombe for his report and commented on the fact that there were no reports from Karen Thomas, Melvin Watts or Phil Stocker to give the meeting their feedback on coaching sessions.

9. ELECTION OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

William Thackwell completes his two years as Chairman and hands over to Cathy Hoskins who was elected Vice Chairman last year. William now takes the position of Immediate Past Chairman.

Other Committee members as shown below were unanimously elected en bloc at the meeting.

Secretary	Janet Perrett
Treasurer	Kim Martin
Club Captain	Alan Wilkins
Club Deputy Captain	Neville Milsted
Social Committee Member	Pauline Johnson
Member (Bar Manager)	Jo Mullner
Member (Newsletter & Website Editor)	Paul Duckworth

Martin Coomber was duly elected as Maintenance Member, being proposed by Jackie A'Violet and seconded by Susan Russell.

Nick Luen was duly elected as Junior Representative, being proposed by Alan Wilkins and seconded by Derce Mercer.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Sunday Social Play: Charles Neilson raised the question of the Social Play rules in respect of waiting times. Alan Wilkins advised the meeting to read the rules, which are posted in the Clubhouse. Members should put their name on the whiteboard when they arrive to allow rotation of members going on court.

Martin Coomber reminded the meeting of the 'peg board' system and how it was used, which has now been replaced by the whiteboard. Alan Wilkins commented that on busy social Sunday mornings short sets should be played to free up courts for everyone to get a game.

After much discussion it was concluded that members, unfortunately, break the rules to play as they wish. Martin then suggested creating a rota of organisers for Sunday social tennis rather than the responsibility falling on the same person every week.

Junior Tennis: Michael Laurenson asked if more junior events could be arranged during the year to encourage junior play.

Alan Wilkins says 'yes'. Neil Buscombe comments that there is no set up to give juniors an opportunity to play on a full court and it's difficult to come up with a solution because the coaches are not structured.

Rachele Laurenson asked – Is it possible to arrange junior tennis which would give them matchplay experience?

Alan Wilkins – Friday night Junior tennis could be resurrected.

Carol Chatterton – Melvin Watts is not currently coaching under 8 yr olds because there are not enough parents requesting this for their children. Parents do not wish to pay an annual junior membership fee for a few lessons. Carol was advised that children get 10 lessons free before having to become a member.

Claire Belsom – Do we advertise for juniors? Melvin should be encouraged to put information on the website.

John Hoskins, Director of Coaching at Bromley, advised the meeting how the juniors paid for coaching sessions at Bromley and commented that there were various ways of encouraging juniors.

The President commented that the coaches work in isolation and need to get together with the tennis committee and discuss the situation.

Richard Ashness. Regrettably, the club is seen as anti juniors in the village and therefore it is difficult to get juniors to play here. The coaches need to be structured. The two longest serving coaches have done a great job but now need to change. Please re-sort the junior issues.

Anne Buscombe asks if all coaches will be made to comply with any changes made.

After continuing discussion regarding coaching, the Chairman put a proposal to the meeting that the committee be given a mandate to set up a formal coaching strategy for the club to cover the full age and ability spectrum. The proposal was seconded by John Hoskins and the chairman commented that it was to be done before the New Year. This strategy would take into account the various points discussed, i.e. coaching regimes and competitions for children. The coaches will need to be involved in these discussions.

Claire Belsom – What is the allowance for new tennis balls?

Alan Wilkins - Summer: April to September, 1 set per court per week

Winter: Every other week, then after 2 weeks used at Sunday tennis.

Team balls are in the storeroom for matches.

There being no further questions, the outgoing Chairman handed over to the new Chairman.

11. CATHY HOSKINS

Cathy introduced herself as the new chairman for the next two years. She asked that if anyone had any suggestions that might benefit the club to either e-mail or speak with her or a member of the committee. She has ideas for change but over the past year as vice chairman has learnt that the set up of the club is complex and it will not always be possible to make changes.

Cathy proposes to introduce a Chairman's Charity and has chosen Cancer Research. A few events will be run over the year proceeds from which will go to the charity. Also, she suggested that instead of sending Christmas cards, members make a donation for the charity.

Cathy closed by saying: "I hope to do a good job and look forward to serving for the next two years".

12. CLOSING REMARKS

The President thanked everyone for attending the AGM, also the bar staff, the management, tennis and social committees for their time and energy in making this club 'what it is' and ensuring it's continued success.

He congratulated Cathy in her first year as chairman and hoped she will receive support from some 'old hands' on the committee.

And finally, a very early apology of absence from next year's club tournament finals day as he and Pauline will be in France.

The meeting closed at 3.25pm.