



Affiliated to the Lawn Tennis Association and a  
section of the Chepstow Athletic Club

## AGM Minutes 2 February 2021

Present: Roger Bazley, Jane Jones, Julia Hitchcock, Gavin Reid, James Leney Jill Leney, Adrian Ford, Carole Jewtha, Caroline Harvey, Angela Seymour, Anna Keele, Phil Conridge, Ben Durman, Brian Lewin, Tim Lewin, David Hughes, Emma Ford, Gary Buchanan, Claire Chisholm, Hugo Maule, Jill Maule, Huw Ellis, Jason Allen, Julian Ebbutt, Lynda Ker, Mal Jones, Ross Eddy, Lesley Russell, Ian Russell, Georgina Russell

Apologies: Margaret Beech, Chris Francis, Dave Slater

### Matters arising from 2019 AGM

- Tennis Wales Safeguarding Audit: this has now been conducted and managed successfully by Julia and Ben
- Club development plan: process is underway and plans shared with membership
- New members welcome pack: Jason has produced one and members to be made aware of this
- Buddy system: Gary made himself available on Tuesdays, (before Covid onset) to welcome people to club night – we need to restart this when club opens again
- Schedule of club activity/events - a schedule is available and needs to be advertised
- Clarify the process in applying for Wimbledon tickets: Claire will provide a summary for members when ticket process confirmed this year

Minutes were proposed by James and seconded by Adrian

### NOTE : Vote on validity of AGM

As it has been over 14 months since the previous AGM, a vote was held to determine if members agreed this AGM was valid: this was unanimously carried.

### [Chairman's report for 2020](#)

#### COVID / CLUB TENNIS

2020 started off fairly normally and in late February the Club hosted our annual Quiz and Presentation Evening which was a great success. Thanks to Caroline Harvey for organising the event which was once again sold out. Thanks also to the ticket sellers and the members who donated prizes which were raffled off. The evening was great fun and raised £686 profit for the club. Also at the event Ian Russell awarded the Club with a cheque for £1,025.51 from his epic sponsored walk around Wales in 2019.

The club had scheduled a number of events for 2020 including Open Days and coaching initiatives with some of our local primary schools. Gary Buchanan had arranged a skittles evening at The Athletics Club which was due to take place in late March but had to be cancelled because of the COVID pandemic. Shortly afterwards we got notification from the Welsh Government that we were required to close the club. We closed the courts on:-

- **24th March - 22nd June**                      **National lock-down**                      **(13-week period)**  
and then we spent a number of weeks, once we were allowed to reopen, with ever changing restrictions on what type of play and coaching were allowed. Over the summer

the restrictions on play were gradually relaxed and courts were busier than I have ever seen them with court utilisation at a record level.

**Thanks to all members for their continued support during this enforced disruption and also to the members of the committee for undertaking the significant additional work that was created by COVID including:-**

- Closing the club / Reopening when allowed with necessary signage displayed / Ongoing work in updating signage when COVID rules changed and communicating these frequent changes to membership throughout the year.
- During the summer and autumn Tuesday club tennis sessions continued to be very well attended with all 3 courts regularly in use. The family club tennis sessions continued on Sunday afternoons at 2pm which were not as well attended and is something we will try to promote in the coming months.
- Ladies club mornings on Tuesdays and Fridays continue to be very well attended. We tried introducing weekly day-time mixed and men's sessions which were not as well attended and once we are able to re-open the club we are going to try replacing these sessions with a Daytime Club Session which all adult members can attend. Thanks to Derek Wickham for his efforts in trying to get these sessions up and running.
- The adult club tournament was again arranged by Jason despite having to start later in the year than normal due to COVID. Very well supported again with good entry levels. Thanks to Jason for running the tournament. COVID lockdowns disrupted the tournament and the club finals will take place once the club re-opens.

Just as things were beginning to look a lot more normal on the tennis front and Winter League matches were even scheduled to take place, after the cancellation of all summer leagues earlier in the year, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave of COVID took hold and we have had further disruption to our tennis.

- **23rd October - 9th November** "Firebreak" (17 day period)
- **Since 19<sup>th</sup> December** National lock-down (6 weeks to date)

### Membership

#### Chepstow Tennis Club membership summary

Summary	As at Nov 16 AGM	As at Nov 17 AGM	As at Nov 18 AGM	As at Nov 19 AGM	As at Nov 20
Adult members	54	61	63	65	84
Senior adult members	22	25	29	34	42
Young adult / Student members	15	16	11	14	25
Junior members	64	54	44	52	39
<b>Totals</b>	<b><u>155</u></b>	<b><u>156</u></b>	<b><u>147</u></b>	<b><u>165</u></b>	<b><u>190</u></b>

#### Membership observations

- Overall membership numbers have increased by 25, compared to position at November 2019 AGM and at 190 total members the club now has significantly more members than we have ever had before. Thanks to everyone for joining the club. Please re-join in April.
- This is despite a fall of 13 juniors from prior year. We believe that our junior membership (particularly the younger juniors) has been hit hard by COVID and the

resultant restrictions. Our plans to visit schools in the Spring / Autumn of 2020 was not possible due to COVID restrictions and our planned Open Day in May, which is an important event in attracting new juniors to the club. We are very confident that Jane and Ross will quickly improve our junior numbers when the COVID restrictions are lifted.

- The increasing membership numbers of our >18 years of age categories was particularly pleasing, with increasing membership numbers in all age ranges, and our overall membership numbers for our >18 years of age categories increasing by 38 net new members which is really encouraging.
- As well as increasing our junior membership numbers next membership year, one of our key objectives has to be to try and retain our now increased adult membership numbers and hopefully attract additional adult members.
- Membership fee income is by far the club's largest income stream. Although the proposed membership fees for next year show a reduction for most membership categories, if our membership numbers were to remain the same as this year our income from membership subscriptions would be increase to £13,800 which would be >£2,400 more than our current annual membership revenue record, which was £11,376 in the 2018 – 2019 financial year.

### **Facilities**

Jason did a fantastic job during the first lockdown, when our courts were closed, spending many hours and days carrying out maintenance on our court surfaces, cutting back the wasteland between our courts and the road. He also spend time repairing our club cabin and replaced and painted the boards surrounding our courts. Our facilities looked brilliant by the time the lockdown ended in late June.

In September the Committee voted to proceed to obtain planning from Monmouthshire Council for new LED Floodlights / Junior Court 4 with hitting wall and a new Clubhouse. We have engaged with local Architects Practice Liddell & Associates to carry out architects drawings to support our planning applications and we now have drawings ready to be submitted once we verify some final details from 3 LTA accredited contractors who we have approached for quotes for Phase 1 of the Development which is for the LED Floodlights / Junior Court 4 with hitting wall, fencing and lighting.

Thanks to Roger who has been working diligently over the past couple of months on a grant application to Sports Wales, that if successful, will go a long way to meeting the cost of our Phase 1 plans (new LED floodlights / Junior Court 4 with associated fencing and hitting wall). The quotes for the cost of this Phase 1 is coming in at c£70,000. Roger has been liaising very closely with Tennis Wales and has developed some important relationships at a senior level, including the Head of Participation at Tennis Wales, who has visited our club to see our current facilities and listen to what we are planning. Tennis Wales and Monmouthshire County Council are now both proactively supporting our grant application to Sports Wales, which although not guaranteeing success (particularly in these COVID times), gives us the best possible chance. This grant application for £50,000 will be submitted in the coming 10 days.

Our ability to proceed with Phase 1 is obviously dependent upon being successful with both our planning application and grant application. If we are restricted by funding, the priority is to find a way to fund the replacement of our ancient existing lights with LED's. As everyone is aware, our existing floodlights continue to cause us problems with a number of lights not working and the club is incurring significant costs to try and repair these floodlight failures when they occur.

## **Coaching & Junior Development**

### **Coaching**

The coaching structure at the club had remained unchanged for many years with Ollie Bendall overseeing the Coaching Program with Pat Wilson and more recently Ross Eddy undertaken coaching sessions as his assistants. We had Ollie coaching for a few hours on Monday evening, Pat doing Sunday mornings / lunchtime + a couple of hours on a Wednesday morning and Ross coaching on a Wednesday evening. All 3 of these coaches had their priorities elsewhere with Ollie coaching full-time in Bristol, Pat being Head Coach at Cwmbran and Ross doing the majority of his hours in Hereford. Although the quality of the coaching was excellent and the Sunday lunchtime group loved Pat, the Monday evening ladies loved Ollie and the Wednesday coaching groups loved Ross, the inevitable outcome of such a set up was that our overall Coaching Programme lacked leadership, communication and proactivity. We raised our concerns in early 2020 with Ollie who understood our concerns but could not commit the time to make the necessary improvements we required.

It was agreed that Ollie would continue in post, until the club recruited a replacement Head Coach. We began our recruitment process in late July when we placed an advert with Tennis Wales looking for a Head Coach who would be focussed solely on Chepstow Tennis Club. The response was phenomenal and by the closing date we had received 8 applications. We created a selection committee to review these applications which consisted of myself, Lesley Russell (ladies captain), Adrian Ford (Men's captain), Julia Hitchcock (Junior Development) and Ollie Bendall. Despite the high quality of applications, we ended up shortlisting 4 candidates for interviews and these interviews were carried out on the 25<sup>th</sup> August.

There were 2 standout candidates and after consideration the selection committee unanimously decided to appoint Jane Jones's as our first female Head Coach. Jane has an excellent reputation within Welsh tennis circles, and I've had nothing but excellent feedback from members and parents since Jane started at the club as Head Coach at the end of September. The other outstanding candidate of our recruitment process was Ross Eddy and I was therefore delighted when Jane and Ross decided to work together to deliver the Coaching Programme at the club. Jane's Coaching Programme has continued all existing adult coaching sessions as well as well as creating brand new adult sessions for beginners and 2 Cardio- tennis fitness sessions weekly which I can personally recommend.

Jane has a particularly strong reputation for coaching juniors, and she has set up a much better coaching programme for our juniors, which includes brand new sessions for our younger juniors and sessions catering for girls only. She has made contact with our local schools and has been active on social media, promoting the Club and the Coaching Programme. Most of the weekly coaching sessions are being held jointly by both Jane and Ross which is brilliant, especially for larger groups.

I am personally really pleased to have Jane as our Head Coach and I am certain that she, with Ross's support, will be a great success at Chepstow Tennis Club and will be transformational in respect of our junior programme.

### **Team Tennis**

Normally there is quite a lot to report on a year's worth of team tennis. Not so much this year.

### **Mixed**

Our new mixed captain Roger Bazley has been delighted by the number of people who have expressed an interest in playing mixed for the club. Apparently 32 people contacted him to say they were interested in playing which is fantastic. There were no summer matches due to Covid and we entered Mixed Teams in the Avon Winter League and the South Wales Winter League. No matches were able to be played in the Avon League but 3 matches were played in the South Wales league with Chepstow winning 2 and losing 1 of these matches.

**Ladies**

A frustrating time for our ladies teams with no summer matches and constant changes to the winter league schedule. Lesley ran an internal match for the ladies before Christmas and will hopefully do so again when the club re-opens.

**Men's**

As with the other teams, competitive tennis has been badly affected by COVID. No summer or winter league matches were possible. Adrian arranged home and away friendlies against Penarth Windsor. Adrian together with Julian Ebbutt captained teams that played 2 internal friendly six-aside matches which were very competitive and good fun.

Hopefully there will be able summer league matches for all our teams in the coming months.

**Closing remarks**

This has been a very challenging year for the club and I would like to thank all Committee Members for their support and commitment over the past 12 months. I would particularly like to thank Jason, Gary and Huw who have left the committee during the past year and would like to thank them all for their hard work and their contributions to the committee. Finally there are 3 key priorities for 2021, as I see them are:-

1. RETAIN & IF POSSIBLE GROW MEMBERSHIP >18 years of age where this year we are at record levels.
2. Support Jane and Ross in their efforts to reinvigorate our Junior Section and significantly increase junior membership numbers, particularly when COVID restrictions are lifted and they can start proactively visiting our local schools to stimulate interest in tennis AND OUR CLUB.
3. Progress our Development Plans (Phase 1 -New LED lights + New Junior Court 4 and hitting wall) as quickly as finances allow without putting the club under financial strain by over-committing ourselves.

**Treasurers Report**

- The club remains on a sound financial footing aided in the main by the strong membership numbers, despite the impact of COVID.
- Although membership fee income was down 45% from 2019 due to the fees reduction that was implemented as a response to COVID, overall revenue was down only 19%. This was due to receiving a £1,150 Grant from Monmouthshire Community Chest and £1,025 being the donation received from Ian Russell from his Sponsored Walk. We also raised £686 at our Quiz night which was £450 more than last year.
- Expenditure was kept under tight control and at just over £6,000 was £1,500 less than last year despite. This is despite spending £876 on development & planning fees and is mainly due to the club no longer playing a coaching retainer.
- Despite the effects of COVID the club generated a surplus of £3,500 in the year with cash reserves increasing to £29,518.
- The Club's current bank balance is £28,673.
- The club needs to increase its annual surplus from c£5k to closer to £10k to enable the future capex projects to be affordable.

Our Treasurer proposed that we change the Financial Year-end from 30th September to 31st March, to bring it in line with the membership year which runs from 1st April - 31st March. There was some discussion on how we would set membership fees and what sort of financial reporting we could have for an AGM in November.

Action: Brian and Gavin to consider this with new committee

## Proposed introduction of additional Membership Categories

The committee recommended some changes to club membership categories:

- **Adult couple**
- **Mini-tennis** - For junior members aged between 4 and 10 years of age.
- **Youth** - Previously our junior category covered everyone under the age of 18. This youth category for members aged between 11 and 18 years of age
- **Student / Young Adult** - Previously for members aged between 18 and 25 years of age. Proposal to change this category for members aged between 19 and 27 years of age.
- **Fitness** - For non-tennis players who wish to attend non-tennis classes such as Cardio Tennis
- **2-month Trial Membership** - For people wishing to try out the club before joining. Trial members will not be eligible to play team tennis for the club and this category will not be available during our busiest months (June - August). Anyone joining after the trial membership period would have the £20 trial membership fee deducted from their membership fee
- **Corporate Membership** - The committee has discussed the possibility of offering Corporate Memberships as a way of attracting new members. No proposal has been finalised yet but by having the creation of this new category, approved at the AGM, it will enable the committee to introduce this if it chooses to.

## Membership subscriptions for the 2021-2022 season

The committee proposed the following membership fees for the 2021-2022 season:

- **Full Adult (aged 28-59) £120** or £10.50 per month (£126)
- **Senior Adult (aged 60+) £80** or £7 per month (£84)
- **Adult Couple £216** or £18.50 per month (£222)
- **Restricted (Off-peak) Adult £80** or £7 per month (£84)
- **Concessionary £40** or £3.75 per month (£45)
- **Student / Young Adult (19-27) £48** or £4 per month (£48)
- **Youth (aged 11-18) £30** or £2.50 per month (£30)
- **Mini-Tennis (aged 4-10) £18** or £1.50 per month (£18)
- **Full Family (Student) £252** or £21.50 per month (£258)
- **Full Family (Junior) £244** or £21 per month (£252)
- **Fitness £30** or £3 per month (£36)
- **2-Month Trial Membership £20**

Also the committee proposed two further changes to the existing arrangement for membership fees:-

- The current 10% discount available for members paying their fees in full in April will be discontinued. Proposed membership fees have been reduced in most categories to reflect this change.
- Introduction of 12-month rolling memberships. This will save the membership secretary a significant amount of work during the year, where they currently have to manually reduce the membership fees for each category for the remainder of the membership year at each quarter end. Existing members would renew in April 2021, as normal, and all new member's 12-month membership year would commence in the month they join.

The proposal for new fees was carried by a majority, with 25 votes supporting this.

### **Proposed change in composition of Chepstow Tennis Club Committee**

A proposal to reduce the number of committee members from 15 to 11 was put forward, to enable us to be more streamlined and enable club members to get involved in i.e the organisation of events and not feel obligated to join the committee.

The following composition was recommended:

- Chairperson & CAC Representative
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Membership Secretary
- Men's Captain
- Ladies' Captain
- Mixed Captain
- Daytime Tennis Representative (new)
- Communications Officer
- Junior Development Officer and Safeguarding and Welfare Officer
- Facilities Officer

Key changes include:

- Removal of club coach as a committee role
- Amalgamation of Chairman and CAC representative
- Amalgamation of Junior development Officer and Safeguarding officer
- Removal of social secretary as a committee role

The proposal was carried by a majority, with 21 votes in favour. It was noted that we do not want the social side of the club to be forgotten or be less important and we need to ensure social activities still take place.

### **Election of 2021 committee**

9 committee positions have been filled; a membership secretary is being sought

	2020/21
<b>Chairman &amp; CAC representative</b>	Gavin Reid
<b>Secretary</b>	Claire Chisholm
<b>Treasurer</b>	Brian Lewin
<b>Men's captain</b>	Adrian Ford
<b>Ladies captain</b>	Lesley Russell
<b>Mixed captain</b>	Roger Bazley
<b>Membership Secretary</b>	<b>TBC</b>
<b>Junior Development &amp; Welfare &amp; Safeguarding Officer</b>	Julia Hitchcock
<b>Daytime tennis organiser</b>	Carole Jethwa
<b>Communications</b>	Ben Durman
<b>Facilities</b>	Tim Lewin

**AOB**

Our Treasurer Brian suggested we move the date of the AGM from November/December to March/April, the start of the membership year.

Action : New committee to consider this

**The meeting closed at 9 pm**