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## **AGM Minutes**

### **11 May 2023**

Present: Karen Ford, Adrian Ford, Lesley Russell, Carole Jethwa, Roger Bazley, Brian Lewin, Ben Waters, Gary Buchanan, Joe Boast, Dom Cheeseman, Anna Keele, Mal Jones, Jane Jones, Ross Eddy, Caroline Harvey, Julia Hitchcock, Paul Gilbert, George Lammie, Huw Ellis, Owain Ellis, Ben Durman, Julian Ebbutt, Jonathan Brasher, Gavin Reid, Claire Chisholm.

Apologies: Ian Russell, Margaret Beech, Jill & Hugo Maule

#### Matters arising from 2021 AGM:

- Adoption of singles ladders: these have been set up and are running
- Try to make tennis accessible to low-income families: this was decided as impractical at this current time
- Run a handicapped tournament, akin to golf: when this was discussed more widely, there was not a lot of willingness to make this happen, with the practicalities of deciding individual handicaps being considered too subjective.

Minutes proposed by Roger Bazley and seconded by Ben Durman

Ben Durman provided an update on preparations for the next stage of club development and a meeting he had with surveyor from Monmouthshire County Council – further updates on this will be available in the coming months.

#### Chairman's report – May 2023

Thank you all for attending this year's Chepstow Tennis Club AGM

I want to spend a few minutes giving you all an update on what has been going on at the tennis club since our last AGM in March last year.

##### Social tennis

Our social tennis on Tuesday evenings remains very popular and there is a regular group who play at our Sunday afternoon social tennis session that runs from 2pm – 4pm on Sunday afternoons. There is also a growing number of WhatsApp groups being formed which has led to members booking regular slots as groups which is great. In general, with our increased membership and improved coaching provision, the courts are being well used and there is a good atmosphere at the club.

We held our annual Quiz night & Prize Giving back in September. Thanks to Caroline Harvey, Claire Chisholm and Carole Jethwa for organising an enjoyable and successful evening which raised £615 for our club.

## **Facilities**

In preparing for tonight I looked back at what I said at the last 2 AGM's. It was only back in February 2021 that I presented the Committee's aim of trying to get planning permission from Monmouthshire County Council to replace our old failing floodlights with new LED floodlights, build a Junior Court 4 with a hitting "wall" and planning permission to build a clubhouse specifically for our tennis club, which would be big enough to have changing rooms and toilets, a lounge / kitchen area and a viewing area looking on to the courts.

In July 2021, our planning application was approved and the committee set out to try and deliver Phase 1 of this project, which was to install new LED floodlighting and to build a Junior Court 4 with hitting fence. Thanks to the hard work of Roger Bazley, who has led this project, the club were successful with a grant application that resulted in the club obtaining funding of £48,500 from Sport Wales, which allowed us to proceed with Phase 1 of the project. Roger spent hours completing the Grant Application and then spent days liaising with Sport Wales and gaining support from Tennis Wales and Monmouthshire Council, who due to his hard work, became strong supporters of our Grant Application.

The first stage of Phase 1 was installing our LED floodlights which were installed in September 2021 and are working well. The days of trying to play evening tennis on partially lit courts, due to constantly failing bulbs are thankfully becoming a distant memory.

The building of Court 4 and the fitting of the hitting fence was completed in October 2022 and with the painting of court 4 having been completed last week, I am pleased to advise that Phase 1 of the project is now complete. It has taken a lot of hard work to get to this point and it has been a real team effort. Particular thanks however, is due to Roger Bazley and Ben Durman, who without their efforts, we would not have been able to accomplish what we have so far.

Phase 1 was a major project for the club. Costs for the major components of Phase1, including VAT, were:-

• Planning	£ 920
• Architect's costs	£ 2,400
• LED floodlights	£26,490
• Hitting Fence	£ 7,874
• Court 4	<u>£40,327</u>
• <b><u>Total</u></b>	<b><u>£78,011</u></b>

This expenditure was funded by:

• Sport Wales Grant	£48,585
• Grant from CAC	£ 5,000

Initially we believed that we would not be able to reclaim VAT on our expenditure and our budgeting was based on that assumption. Thankfully working with the CAC Treasurer and their Accountants we have been able to get CAC to reclaim VAT of £4,415, on our behalf, for our spend on our new LED floodlights and £6,721 for our spend on building Court 4.

This has meant that of a total spend of £78,011, the net spend to the club, after Grant receipts and VAT reclaims totalling £64,721 has been only £13,290, which is significantly lower than budgeted.

We now move on to Phase 2 of our development plans, which is our planned new clubhouse which is an even larger, more expensive project and fundraising to try and make this happen will be a priority over the coming year. The first step, agreed by the committee, is to engage with a Quantity Surveyor who can give us a professional estimate of the cost of building a new clubhouse, based on our architects' drawings. Once we have a credible estimate of the costs involved we can start approaching potential sources of funding. With that in mind, I will handover to Ben Durman who can update everyone on a meeting he had recently with Mike Moran, Community Infrastructure Coordinator for Monmouthshire County Council.

## Membership

### Chepstow tennis club membership summary

Summary	As at Nov 19 AGM	As at Feb 21 AGM	As at Mar 22 AGM	As at May 23 AGM
Adult members	65	84	102	85
Senior adult members	34	42	49	51
Young adult / student	14	24	21	28
Total adult members	113	150	172	164
Total junior members	52	39	94	95
<b>Totals</b>	<b><u>165</u></b>	<b><u>189</u></b>	<b><u>266</u></b>	<b><u>259</u></b>

### Membership observations

- The club currently has a total of 259 members. This comprises of 164 adult members (in our Senior Adult, Full Adult and Young Adult categories) and 95 junior members.
- Overall membership numbers have fallen slightly by 7 total members since our last AGM in March 2022, when our membership numbers sat at a record 266 total members.
- This is still a very healthy number and is an increase of 94 total members over the past 3-years, with adult members increasing by 51 over this period and junior members increasing by 43 members.
- The focus for the coming year is to try to retain our increased number of members. With that in mind the committee voted to keep membership fees unchanged for the current year to try and make our membership, as affordable as possible, at time when the cost of living is increasing so much for everyone.
- Given that this AGM is being held just after our busiest renewal period, whereas last year's AGM was held in March, just before the busiest renewal period, I am confident that we will reach a record number of members in the coming month. If that happens the committee may have to consider closing membership to new members to ensure that the courts don't get too busy for our existing membership.

### Coaching & Junior Development

Since Jane took over as Head Coach in September 2020, the coaching provision at our club has improved dramatically. With Marc Wachter joining Jane and Ross over the past 12 months, we are now in the enviable position of having 3 high quality coaches serving the needs of our members. Their energy and hard work, to make the coaching programme a success at Chepstow Tennis Club, is clear to see. It is brilliant to now have 3 great people who are focussing their efforts on improving our club.

All 3 coaches are very visible at the club and the number of coaching led group sessions has increased from 11 per week, prior to Jane becoming Head Coach, to 23 sessions per week currently, including beginners and cardio sessions which our club previously did not offer. As well as group lessons they are busy providing individual lessons to our members.

As well as the visible on-court stuff there is a crucial element to being a successful Head Coach that is not so obvious. This behind the scenes off-court work is an area where Chepstow Tennis Club has been lacking in the past and is an area that Jane is particularly good at, which is clearly benefitting our tennis club. Jane has proactively developed close links with our local schools, which is increasing the profile of our club and has directly resulted in the increase in kids who are interested in playing tennis and who are now junior members at our club.

The increased number of junior members we have now means we can field more junior teams and this summer we have U8's, U9's, U10's, U12 Girls, U12 Boys and U14 Boys teams representing Chepstow Tennis Club in the South Wales league.

The introduction of beginners and improvers group lessons has been a really important factor in our increase in adult members over the past 18 months. Previously, we really didn't cater for adults who were interested in learning to play tennis, and the new sessions which Jane has introduced have proved incredibly popular, and has directly resulted in a significant number of new members to our tennis club.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Jane, Ross and Marc for their hard work. They are real assets to our club.

### **Tesco Blue Token scheme**

Our club was awarded a grant of £1,000 via the Tesco Blue Token scheme with the purpose of being used to provide free tennis to our community. The committee has so far decided to use this money for 2 projects.

1. Firstly we reached out to the Ukrainian community, who had moved to our area, to offer their kids free places in our Group kids coaching sessions. We funded 5 Ukrainian kids to join our coaching programme with this initiative being funded for 18 weeks at a cost of £445.
2. The 2<sup>nd</sup> initiative we used the Tesco Grant for was to try and encourage more teenage girls to play tennis. We funded a 6 week block of group lessons on a Friday evening, run by Ross, exclusively for teenage girls to try tennis for free, at a cost of £120. This initiative was a success and this coaching group continues on a Friday evening, with these 7 girls now being members of our club and paying for their own coaching.

### **Club Tournament**

The annual club tournament took place again. We are grateful for the hard work of Lesley Russell for arranging and managing the tournament which was a resounding success with a total of 45 members taking part, which is brilliant. Lesley's suggestion of concluding the tournament by holding a finals day was another real success with all adult finals taking place on one afternoon, with some excellent matches taking place, watched by a healthy number of spectators.

Congratulations to our Club Champions who were:

- Lesley Russell - Ladies Singles
- Joe Boast – Men's singles
- Lesley Russell & Becky Allcock – Ladies Doubles
- Ben Durman & Adrian Ford – Men's Doubles
- Jane Jones & Ross Eddy - Mixed Doubles

### **Team tennis**

I have asked our Ladies, Men's and Mixed captains to submit a review of the year for their teams so I could share them with you.

### **Ladies team report from Lesley Russell – Ladies team captain**

"Over the Summer & Winter 2022 seasons – 19 ladies played for our teams, 2 in the summer and 2 in the winter. We managed to stay in the same division for both teams in both the summer and winter seasons which was great.

An increased number of ladies have attended the group coaching provided by Jane & Ross on Monday evenings and more recently, Thursday daytimes. Together with individual sessions for some ladies this coaching has improved the standard of ladies tennis across the board. In addition, playing in mixed matches is very popular among the ladies & thank you to Roger and Caroline for organising these matches.

We held our popular annual ladies team meal in September 2022. 19 ladies including some non team players entered the 2022 annual club tournament which was nice to see.

And in addition to social club sessions some additional very enjoyable adhoc tennis 4's have been arranged during the day.

So lots of good tennis and thankyou to everyone who supported me as captain especially when having to rearrange matches due to bad weather which unfortunately has been a feature of the last couple of seasons."

### **Men's team report from Adrian Ford – Men's team captain**

"I'm glad to report that this last 12 months has, once again, been a success for Men's team tennis.

We had 3 teams playing in the summer leagues, 3 in the winter leagues along with a further team playing in the indoor winter league. This resulted in the 2<sup>nd</sup> team being promoted in both the summer & winter leagues & 3rd team winning their winter league. A special additional mention is needed for the indoor Winter league team that not only won their league but won all nine matches and they picked up a rather nice shiny trophy.

I'm over the moon with the success of the teams but as was the case in last year's AGM update, what I'm most pleased with is the number of men that have participated in competitive league tennis, with some doing so for the first time. A total of 27 players were involved over the last 12 months beating the previous record of 23 that was set last year. I'd like to thank every one of them for their efforts in representing the club and particularly the other captains Huw Ellis, Julian Ebbutt & Adrian Morgan as this wouldn't have been possible without their fantastic efforts. These numbers suggest that we are giving those that want to play competitive tennis an opportunity to do so, and also confirms my thoughts that the future of the club is looking rosy. Let's strive to make this coming season as good as last, if not better."

### **Mixed team report from Roger Bazley – Mixed team captain**

"The last 12 months has seen the Mixed teams going from strength to strength with very few games having to be abandoned due to the weather.

Last Summer we fielded two mixed teams, Chepstow A and Chepstow B. I managed the Mixed A Team with Caroline Harvey managing the Mixed B Team. Playing in the Mixed Premier and Mixed Division 1 Leagues, both teams found themselves in second place within their respective Leagues. We ended up with 27 points in joint first place with All-yr-yn A and Stow Park respectively, losing out on sets, so it couldn't have been closer.

During last Winter, again we put out two teams in the South Wales and Avon Leagues. Placed second in the Avon League for Chepstow A, I am delighted that Chepstow B found themselves winning the Mixed South Wales League, Division 3, meaning promotion next season. Captained by Caroline Harvey with a great team, Chepstow can now look forward to Division Two status next Winter. Many congratulations to all who played in these matches.

This Summer sees a Chepstow A and Chepstow B Mixed in the County League. Both teams are currently holding their own and thanks to the support of the club members we are lucky

enough to have two strong teams to represent Chepstow Tennis Club. Both teams have also entered the Knock Out Cup. Being drawn against each other in the first round, saw Chepstow A victors after a really exciting match. Now through to the semi-finals, Chepstow A will play All-yr-yn A during week commencing 16th June. Very best of luck to them.

May I take this opportunity to thank Caroline Harvey for all her hard work and dedication in organising the second Mixed Chepstow Team. Also, my thanks to all club members who have taken part, lots of games to come."

Thank you Roger. I would like to put on record my thanks to Lesley Russell, Adrian Ford, Huw Ellis Julian Ebbutt, Adrian Morgan, Roger Bazley and Caroline Harvey for their hard work in running our adult teams over the past 12 months.

### **Treasurer's report**

Thank you to our Treasurer, Brian Lewin, for his hard work throughout the year and for producing our annual accounts.

You should all have a copy of the annual accounts and I would like to talk you through some of the key information in these accounts:-

- The column on the left shows our income & expenditure for our financial year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 with the column on the right showing our previous financial year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.
- The main thing I would like to highlight are the exceptional / non recurring items which we have seen due to our Phase 1 Development Project over the past 2 financial years. On the income side in FY22 we had Grant Income of £43,867 being 80% of our grant from Sports Wales which was £38,867 + receipt of the £5,000 grant from Chepstow Athletic Club. In FY23, we had Grant Income of £10,717. £9,717 was the remaining 20% received from our Sport Wales Grant and £1000 being the Grant from the Tesco Blue Token scheme.
- On the expenses side the vast majority of the costs on the "tennis courts development and maintenance" line relates to the costs of Phase 1, being our new LED floodlights, new hitting fence and our junior Court 4, which we have incurred over the past 18 months.
- If we exclude the grant receipts and assume more normal maintenance costs of £3k per annum, we show an annual underlying surplus of £7,100 being achieved in the financial year to March 2022 and an annual underlying surplus of £10,880 being generated in the financial year to March 2023. This is satisfactory as the club ideally needs to generate a minimum surplus of £10,000 per year to build up a sinking fund to cover the costs of ultimately replacing our courts when we need to.
- Membership fee income is by far our club's largest and most important income stream. Despite the club keeping its membership fees as low as possible and well below those of all other nearby clubs, the increased membership numbers has meant that our annual membership fees collected in the financial year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 was £18,018. This has exceeded our previous record for annual membership fee income by £2,258, beating the previous record £15,761 which was set last year.
- Our current bank balance, as at today, is looking really healthy at £46,841. But it is where we need it to be, given that our courts are >10 years old and we are looking to build a new clubhouse

### **Court damage caused by tree roots at the back of Court 1**

The CAC has agreed to meet the cost of removing the conifer tree at the back (near the road) of Court 1. This will be arranged as quickly as possible to stop any damage being done to the playing surface of Court 1.

### **Daytime access to CAC**

The CAC has undertaken to quickly find a solution to enable our members to have access to toilets and changing rooms during the daytime when the bar is closed. They are meeting their alarm company soon and I am hoping that a solution will be in place within the next month.

### **Closing remarks**

This has been a really busy year and I would really like to thank all Committee Members for their support and hard work over the past year which has got the club into the strong position it is in right now.

Finally, there are 2 key priorities for the coming year, as I see them.

1. **Retain our healthy membership levels** - The ambitious plans we have for the club will only be possible if we can retain the membership levels we currently have. We will only do that if we can continue to make Chepstow Tennis Club a friendly welcoming club and if members enjoy their tennis at our club and feel they are getting value for money.
2. **We need to start working on fundraising for Phase 2, our proposed new clubhouse, which would be transformational for our tennis club if we could deliver it.**

### **AOB**

We may need to consider a cap on membership, if numbers continue to rise, as some members have commented on the difficulty of booking courts. One possibility is to limit the number of bookings per week.

Action: committee to consider this

It was suggested that we should have more Tennis space in social area of club and celebrate more what we are doing and what's happening in the club.

Action: committee to consider including club/team photos and a display cabinet in the bar area.

### **The meeting closed at 8.35**