

DEDHAM LAWN TENNIS CLUB

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held via zoom, Friday 13 November 2020

PRESENT;

Sachio Ando SA	Chair & Junior
Sallianne Taylor ST	Secretary
Adrian Brown AB	Communications
Hilary Cairns HC	Membership
Richard Heath RH	Treasurer
James Prior JP	Internal & External play (new)
Zico Davies ZD	Junior elect
Steve Watchorn SW	Welfare

8 Club members present, apologies from Simon Underwood.

1. WELCOME BY CHAIRMAN

The Chair welcomed all members to the first virtual AGM and highlighted that being virtual meant the Club is finally able to go paperless.

2. APPROVAL OF 2019 AGM MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the 2019 AGM were proposed by HC, and seconded by ST. A suggested analysis of Club Sessions around standards of play was deemed to be a non-issue for 2020. Missing trophies have all been found and aside from those presented to the Singles winners, all trophies are now in the Club House.

The suggestion to shorten matches/tie breaks was also a non-issue as no external matches were played due to Coronavirus, however there were strong objections posed by other clubs to the proposal.

It was agreed that ZD would join Committee meetings as the Junior representative but will not be an official Committee Member because of a conflict of interest (he is a fee liable coach at the Club).

The proposal to acquire a defibrillator was passed – this has now been purchased and is awaiting installation. Marianne Gilbert asked if there would be training for its use. SW said that as soon as possible he will arrange training but highlighted that they are designed to be as easy to use as possible.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - SA

SA presented the following report and said not surprisingly every report will make reference to the impact of Coronavirus. He thanked everyone for their support and paid tribute to B-J Underwood. He emphasised the need for more volunteers to help the Club and thanked the committee and members for their hard work and support. He offered a special thank you to Simon Underwood and Rob Boyd and showed some 'tennis style' salad servers which will be presented to them both.

Last autumn when I tried to persuade Steve to take over Mike's role as Welfare Officer, I mentioned that most work had been done in 2019 and probably there was not much

to do for 2020. I could not have picked a year to be more wrong about an outlook on health and safety issues at the club.

How 2020 unfolded was beyond everyone's imagination

The coronavirus crisis started to surface as we were getting ready for the tennis season. Our membership year started on 1st March 2020 and within weeks the whole country went into lockdown. Many cancelled their memberships or did not renew, and it seemed at one point that our club was about to experience a collapse of financial income. Luckily many of our members stayed with us and, when rules on outdoor exercise were relaxed, outdoor tennis was one of the first to be allowed to resume. A combination of indoor facilities still being closed and other outdoor clubs failing to reopen, plus a general lack of sport alternatives, there was an influx of new members which helped rejuvenate the club. During late Spring and Summer, our club witnessed an unprecedented situation whereby our courts were almost constantly fully booked.

It was, however, not all good news at our club. Sadly, our beloved member B-J Underwood passed away in June, which came as a shock to us all and which we are still trying to come to terms with.

The restrictions were slowly lifted, and it provided opportunities for members to regain much needed normality through exercise and social interaction. By early Summer we had resumed our club sessions, only for it to be shut again due to outbreaks in North England, and it was another 3 weeks before we re-resumed again, losing precious weeks at the height of our tennis season. Despite the difficulties and uncertainty, we managed to hold two tournaments which included the well-attended and brilliantly organised singles tournament.

Coaching resumed for both juniors and adults and, with Paul being around in addition to Zico, there were many who spent the summer improving their tennis utilising times they would have otherwise spent commuting in previous years.

It is rather disappointing that we are heading towards the end of the year with another lockdown. We are optimistically reminded, however, that we paradoxically saw a sharp increase in membership and court utilisation due to the lockdown, and there is no doubt that our club will show optimism and strength to find positives in the difficult months ahead.

Some issues remain from last year, and my constant message to all members has been a request for volunteers to help run the club. Our club is a community club run by volunteers and we constantly need new committee members to fill roles. It is a friendly and relatively informal team working on many different issues surrounding the club. Please contact us if you think you can help the club in any way.

A heartfelt thanks go to all the committee members and helpers who worked tirelessly to run and improve the club despite the difficult circumstances we faced this year. A special thank you to the following committee members, who have retired from their post this year.

- *Simon, who has spent many years at the committee, constantly and proactively seeking ways to improve the club and executing such plans with military precision.*
- *Rob, who responded to calls for a volunteer last year, and brought us much energy and humour to the committee*

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has kindly supported me during my time at the committee. My 3-year tenure as chairperson is coming to an end at this AGM. I would be most grateful if you could extend your support to the next chairperson who the committee will elect in the coming weeks.

4. INTERNAL PLAY REPORT - SA

Due to the restrictions and disruptions caused by the coronavirus crisis, only two tournaments could be held: Henry Green, and singles tournaments. Both saw large numbers of entrants which were at levels we have not seen at our club in recent years. We hope to see similar numbers for all the competitions we hold next year.

Club session attendance had been dwindling in the past years but it was rejuvenated by the influx of new members, most notably from David Lloyd. Various restrictions such as one-way system on the courts and no handshakes did not dampen the social atmosphere of the club sessions. One thing that was sorely missed was the afternoon tea which was the highlight of the afternoon for many.

SW gave a huge thank you to all the entrants who stuck to deadlines and participated in some epic tie-breaks!

SA mentioned that the plan to keep all sessions to the afternoons avoided confusion for newer members over the timing of the sessions. SA said it would be up to the committee to decide on the timings going forward.

5. EXTERNAL PLAY REPORT - SA

All external matches were cancelled before the season began. We sincerely hope that we will get to see a return of inter-club matches again next year.

SA confirmed that James Prior will take over as External and Internal Play committee member.

6. COMMUNICATIONS REPORT - AB

AB underlined the fact that all communications originate from the Chair. He has updated the website and regularly posts to facebook, twitter and Instagram. He asked for people to send him any ideas going forward. AB gave the following report.

- **Website** - *Now completely updated with some new features and posts. Hopefully you will all agree it now looks like we are a fully functioning club with*

recent news, posts, images and content. Please feel free to ask for things to be added and updated if required.

- **Website Tracking** - I have just applied to Google analytics and Clubspark to enable this feature. In the future I will be able to give you stats on traffic, click through details and how well the site is performing. (Hopefully)
- **Newsletters** - Normally from the chairman, are performing really well as most people will get these, I generally copy and paste these to all our other channels with the hope if someone deletes the email it will still pop up somewhere else.
- **WhatsApp** - Utilised really well by most at the club, and a good method of registering who is attending club sessions for track and trace along with our new QR codes.
- **Facebook** - A great place for updates and continues to perform really well, with the added benefit that we can include images of events, news articles etc. We have 174 followers and continue to get good post engagements. Last month alone we reached 133 people, got 47 post engagements and had a few page likes...
- **Twitter** - Another avenue for all our posts, we currently have 443 followers so continue to reach a good many people when we have a message to share.
- **Instagram** - Numbers are a little low on this image sharing platform, but it's always good to get images from around the club shared through this medium when we can. We have around 64 followers so it's still worth doing and as I cross share between Instagram, Facebook and Twitter it drives more traffic to all.

7. JUNIOR REPORT - SA

Zico has led a successful year for the juniors despite the lockdown and restrictions on class sizes.

Junior classes have expanded steadily and now there are 5 classes on Saturday (red ball, orange ball, green ball, and two yellow balls), with each being attended by 8-10 children. The plan is to keep on expanding, with ambitions to set up junior teams if there are enough numbers and interest. Also, a "cardio tennis" class for adults have been started on Saturday mornings which will suit parents whose children are attending the junior classes afterwards.

Battery powered mobile LED light stands were purchased to ensure that some lessons can carry on after sunset.

Junior open day could not be held due to the coronavirus restrictions, but it is planned to have one next year.

Zico will effectively take over the Juniors Committee member role in 2021, though technically he will not be an official committee member as he has conflict of interest. He will attend committee meetings and communicate his plans and ideas.

SA mentioned that the mobile LED lights are only £20 each so once we are able to return to the courts we should encourage members to try them out. ZD also commented on the Communications report to suggest that TikTok might be a good medium to reach the Juniors. AB said there could be an issue with filming children unless they film themselves. ZD said he always makes parents sign a consent form for the Junior Summer camps so perhaps this should be standard for all Junior activities? SW said he would discuss with ZD and AB once he has refamiliarized himself with the welfare/safeguarding guidelines re; photography.

There was no facilities report but thanks were given again to Simon Underwood for managing the courts and arranging the moss clearance. The dip on court one has undergone a temporary fix which looks good and should last until the courts are resurfaced in a couple of years. The plan is to resurface all three courts but logistically they may be done one by one. The assumption is that the LTA will pay up to a half of associated costs. Simon Underwood also arranged the purchase of new nets and the old ones have been given to Highfield Primary School in Manningtree.

8. MEMBERSHIP REPORT - HC

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY	2017	2018	2019	2020
Family (Senior/Junior)	22 (43/34)	20 (46/15)	16 (30/17)*	33 (65/39)*
Individual	34	32	33	48
Intermediate	4	3	3	3
Junior/Parent(restricted)	8 (11/11)	7 (10/7)	11 (13/15)*	15 (15/22)*
Junior	24	7	23	20
Senior Weekday	13	7	6	7
Honorary & coaches	6	6	4 & 3	3 & 2
TOTAL MEMBERS	180	133	147	224

Note: Information taken from Clubspark on 4th November 2020.

** number of adults/juniors within package*

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY	Not renewed (exc those who changed category)	Last year	New (inc those who changed category)	Last year (exc cat. change)
Family	2	3	20	3
Individual	7	8	23	4
Intermediate	1	1	1	0
Junior/Parent	4	1	9	5
Junior	6	2	4	8
Senior Weekday	2	2	1	1

Well it's been a strange year & continues to be so as we enter a second lockdown. However, we have benefitted by attracting a lot of new members who were unable to play indoor tennis, who were working from home or who moved into the area. Hopefully the majority will rejoin in 2021. We do still have difficulty attracting & retaining junior & intermediate members & we need to think seriously how this can be achieved next year.

There were various reasons for members not renewing – uncertainty over the situation due to Covid, moving to other clubs or moving from the area being the main ones.

I have proposed that there is no increase in subs for 2021.

HC commented on the growth of the membership – a number changed category from individual to family but we still need more Juniors and Young Adults. ZD said he believes a number of Juniors have not paid their membership of £5 and so HC will send him a list of all Junior members so he can cross check with those that play.

ST mentioned that the Essex rep had asked how the Club was doing and was very impressed by the growth in numbers. ST has asked for information on how DLTC compares to other clubs in Essex and he will revert as soon as he has information.

9. WELFARE REPORT - SW

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the way the club has been able to operate over the last twelve months. Inevitably this has affected our approach to ensuring the health and wellbeing of our members during this time.

With a national lockdown being announced in mid-March, we followed Government and LTA advice to shut our courts on 24th March. All play was suspended until 13th May when – again, in line with official advice – we reopened the courts for singles play, followed by doubles on 1st June. Club sessions started up again on 28th June.

As club sessions reopened, we introduced a new system of recording who has attended each time - our WhatsApp '🟡🟡🟡' system has been very well used by club members. In October we also provided the official NHS COVID-19 'track and trace' QR code for all members to scan as they visit the club.

While play has been allowed to different extents throughout this period, we have

introduced new measures to ensure the safety of our members. Social distancing and hand sanitising have been a key part of our response as well as closing the clubhouse and reverting to a stripped back 'DIY' approach to refreshments during club sessions.

Sadly, with a new national lockdown coming into effect on 5th November we find ourselves back in the position of having to shut the club for all play for the time being. We remain alert to all further announcements and will adapt our approach in line with the latest guidance.

In other news, we have bought a public access defibrillator to be installed on the outside wall of our clubhouse. This will be a direct benefit to the club as well as the local community. We were able to purchase this using a discounted, LTA-sponsored offer as well as securing a £500 grant from Essex Tennis. Club members have also generously donated £655 towards the cost of the equipment. We expect the defibrillator to be installed in the coming weeks.

Our Welfare and Safeguarding policies were all updated and hosted on our club website in March 2020.

I have received no reports of any Safeguarding issues during the last twelve months. My contact details remain available on the club website for members to raise any questions or concerns.

SW said the installation of the defibrillator had been delayed but he is meeting with the electrician within the next couple of weeks so it should be sorted soon.

10. TREASURER'S REPORT - RH

*Current bank balance as at 30th September - £8,713
Savers balance - £42,787
Cash - £262*

I have put the financial accounts together and the figures will go to Debbie to audit once the latest lockdown is over. This is my second year of doing these so my confidence in the figures may be misplaced, but all figures seem to tie up.

Before any adjustments Debbie might suggest, this year's accounts are showing a profit of £7,375, compared to last year's loss of £2,598.

COVID may have been a blight on everyone's year, but it has helped the club financially with membership income significantly up by £4,062 (58%) and stripe/guest court fees up by £1,785 (790%!).

Expenditure was down by £3,630 mainly because of last year's high cost of court repairs.

As lockdown has restricted the number of club sessions available during the year, and inflation is very low anyway, I propose that no increases are made to next year's

membership fees. So, they would remain as -

- *Senior £108*
- *weekday £73*
- *Family £183*
- *Intermediate £46*

There were 2 payments for Dedham sports club as they did not invoice us the year before. Although we did originally pay £330 to Essex LTA in October 2019, they refunded this in June 2020 as a concession was given to clubs.

Social events were obviously limited this year and the only income received was for the quiz night.

RH said he will ask Debbie Sainty to audit the accounts once lockdown is over. He also reminded members to add a description to any payments made to the Club so he knows what they are for.

RH also said that the Club has a petty cash box that can be used to purchase small items. Debbie Sainty suggested putting the cash into the bank as all payments nowadays are by card – RH will put the cash in the bank once lockdown is over. SA thanked Debbie for looking at the accounts every year.

The proposal to keep membership fees unchanged was put forward by RH and seconded by HC. ZD suggested that AB advertise the fact that there is no fee increase. ZD asked if members can only pay annually and HC reminded members that there is a fee decrease midway through the year. AB said he preferred to keep any advertisements simple and to highlight no fee increases on the website. ZD will speak with AB re; advertising banners.

11. SOCIAL REPORT - SA

The annual pub quiz was successfully held in early March which raised money for the club and was well attended. Unfortunately, that was the only social event we could organise for the year.

13. AOB

SA mentioned that there had been debate over the purchase of a ball feeding machine and maybe we should look to invest in one for next year. RH said Rob Boyd had investigated but nothing was done at the time. AB said Paul Newman has one and has used it at Dedham. There are various programs that can be used – it is battery operated and the charge seems to last well. Robert Lewis commented that a ball machine used by club members is a different proposition to one being used by a single coach. AB said effectively a ball machine would need someone to maintain it. ZD said that it could be useful for drills at club sessions – maybe a committee member could be responsible for it and it could be used on court three as an option.

Angela Green suggested putting a regular write up in the Dedham Parish magazine – as a Dedham resident she believes a lot of people read the magazine. ZD said he

has contacts at Dedham Primary school and so maybe we could do a piece for the school and for the magazine. AB highlighted that an amended advertisement for the Club will be put in the next Dedham Parish magazine.

SA announced the committee members will remain, except for SA as his tenure as Chair comes to an end now. JP will join as Internal and External Play – this was proposed by SA and seconded by Angela Green.

Only one item had been submitted for discussion at the AGM and concerned the possibility of refunds for membership over the lockdown period. SA said that whilst we are not a 'not for profit' organisation we are also not a money making organisation and thus any monies paid to the Club are for the Club and therefore the concept of a refund does not apply as well as other provision of commercial services such as David Lloyd. HC said that over half of our members joined after the first lockdown and RH added that it would be a logistical nightmare to give partial refunds to all who joined at different times. He said he was not sure what our T & Cs say. Debbie Sainty pointed out that we do not give refunds for other times the Club is unavailable eg; flooding. SA said lockdown was forced upon us and the magnitude of the payment is not huge for the individual but nevertheless significant for the Club when added together.

ST suggested we highlight the benefits of the Club (many other Clubs didn't open as quickly after lockdown) in an end of year letter. All those present were against the possibility of refunding, and since there was no proposer to the motion, no vote was taken.

SA closed the AGM by thanking everyone for their support and said he looked forward to seeing everyone on court soon. Angela Green thanked SA for his leadership and SW thanked SA on behalf of the committee and the members. He said he would be a hard act to follow as he had made the Club into a real community. SA was presented with a gift voucher for Stringers World. ZD ended by saying that he only began as a coach around the time SA became Chair and SA had been a rock to him.