

DEDHAM LAWN TENNIS CLUB

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held in the Sports Pavilion, Dedham Friday 29 November 2019

PRESENT; 15 members

Apologies received from Debbie Sainty, Rob Boyd

1. WELCOME BY CHAIRMAN

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and pointed out that agenda items were no longer being printed out in bulk to cut down on paper waste and help the club to go green.

2. APPROVAL OF 2018 AGM MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The Minutes of the 2018 AGM were proposed by Hilary Cairns HC and seconded by Halford Hewitt HH They were passed unanimously. Matters arising from 2018 covered a change to the 'sudden death' which was defeated, the addition of a monthly Sunday morning club session in the Summer which was passed 16-2 in favour, the declining standard of the club session, and the number of committee roles.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Sachio Ando SA submitted the following report.

It has been another great year for the club with many highlights.

We still have issues giving us challenges to our club but there were positive elements to all:

- *Lack of volunteers - It has been difficult in recruiting or replacing committee members. Currently the Social role is vacant, and Maintenance role will soon be vacant. Ideally, we will also have Juniors and Communications. (2020 will be my final year as Chairperson) However, the roles of Internal and External Play were found last year around the time of the AGM, and the critical roles of Club Secretary and Welfare officers were filled this year which will ensure that the club will continue to function into next year.*
- *Declining members – This is still a problem but the speed of the decline was not as quick as once feared*
- *Club session attendance - The Summer morning sessions were successful but they failed to increase the number of attendances compared to the afternoon sessions. There were, however, extremely encouraging signs of new regular attendees most notably from David Lloyd members. They rejuvenated the sessions with enthusiasm and high standards of tennis.*

The club continued in 2019 as a friendly club for the community:

- *Social events run by Sam, Helen and other volunteers were very successful, with pub quiz, Wimbledon final viewing, and the second Ping Pong & Pizza.*
- *Many volunteers got together to organise exciting events such as Ladies Tournament & Lunch and Indian tournament.*
- *Thanks to Simon's efforts, the clubhouse walls and the courts were thoroughly cleaned and repainted, including the removal of the infamous graffiti.*
- *Pete organised practice sessions as well as many successful tournaments. An administrative note: please look for tournament trophies at home because we are short of a few of them*
- *Richard led a successful marketing campaign in recruiting DL members, which led to the rejuvenation of club sessions*
- *The organisers on Sunday club sessions continue to provide a friendly atmosphere through the provision of tea and cakes.*

Thank you very much for all the committee members who worked tirelessly to run and improve the club. A special thank you to the following committee members, who are leaving the committee this year.

- *Sam, who has worked tirelessly despite her other commitments, pulled off hugely popular and successful events like the mid-Summer party and Ping Pong & Pizza events.*
- *Mike has transformed the administrative and compliance framework, allowing our club to be accredited by the LTA*

We are continually looking for more volunteers to help with the running of the club, as we are always short of volunteers.

We are looking forward to another successful year.

Robert Lewis RL raised the issue around the standard of play at club sessions and pointed out that inevitably there are fewer members during the Winter which impacts the ratio of strong versus weaker players. It was reiterated that everybody needs to play their turn and not step down unnecessarily. The website does not currently reflect the correct club session times so HH will insure this is rectified.

A discussion ensued around the success of the Sunday morning sessions. SA said there was no difference between the numbers of members attending the morning versus the afternoon sessions. The suggestion was made to increase the morning sessions to twice a month and HC requested a 10am start instead of 9.30am. It was decided to make no changes until SA has performed an analysis of who attends which sessions and whether the quality of play was better at mornings versus afternoons.

4. INTERNAL PLAYING REPORT

- *Henry Green Tournament – very good turnout at the start of the year, won by Gilly & Pete*

- *Ladies' and Men's Tie Break Singles Competitions format piloted (great suggestion by Mike). Short format worked and completed in a single afternoon. Won by Fiona and Neil respectively.*
- *4 pre-season practice/coaching sessions held for Ladies' and Men's Doubles concentrating on matchplay. Seemed to be appreciated and successful, despite the weather at times.*
- *Indian Tournament held again, organised by Robert, and event proved a success.*
- *Ladies' and Men's Club Doubles Tournaments held and won by Hayley and Gilly, and Rob and Martin respectively. Very good turnout for the men, only 3 pairs for the ladies.*
- *Mixed Club Doubles due to be held in August postponed due to insufficient entrants. Will plan to reschedule this to the start of the 2020 season, to be followed by the 2020 Mixed Club Doubles towards the end of the season.*
- *Ladies' and Men's Club Singles tournaments held across August and September using a league then knockout format. Good response from some groups, disappointing from others in both draws, however, both events were a success. Finals delayed until October. Hayley triumphant over Debbie in the Ladies' and Steve beating Adrian in the Men's. Good support from the crowd in not great weather.*

Observations –

- *Issue with lack of trophies and keeping tabs on who had what in previous years. Have suggested trophies are kept all year round in a new cabinet installed in the clubhouse.*
- *Still no juniors coming through and suggestions made for mechanisms to introduce them into club play and matches stymied by safeguarding concerns.*
- *Club and club sessions have benefitted from a good influx of new and enthusiastic club members this year.*

HH commented that the Mens A team tends not to turn up whilst the Women A and B teams attend regularly. The need for the A team to play club sessions was underlined as a means to improve the quality of the B team players. SA said he felt there were more A team player this year and has the names from the individual sessions from which he can show an analysis of whether this is true or not. Peter Cook PC stressed that he believes the standard of club sessions at Dedham is superior to other clubs and HH reiterated the need for analysis of the club sessions to identify trends.

Steve Watchorn SW suggested a membership survey to get feedback but PC responded by saying people should attend the AGM if they want to contribute their views.

5. COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Main forms of communication are still newsletter (email) and whatsapp.

- *Newsletter is functioning well despite the fears we once had around GDPR, thanks to the efforts made by Mike to get members to opt-in.*
- *Whatsapp is a very convenient tool to get instant messages across, but constant updates for new members are needed which is cumbersome*
- *Our facebook page is continually updated, but it is not clear how much new access facebook is getting, and uploaded information tends to be a repeat of what is uploaded on whatsapp.*
- *Our website is a good source of information for new members and prospective members, but it is not easy to edit and is unsuitable for usage as a source of most up to date information.*

Ideally, we would have someone more social media savvy in this role.

6. EXTERNAL PLAYING REPORT

SA presented the report as Rob Boyd RB sent apologies for his absence.

I would like to thank the all the team captains for their valiant efforts this season under very difficult circumstances, the weather didn't help on occasions also the difficulty in keeping a settled team, with players being unavailable it was a struggle and also with such a small pool of players to choose from !! It was close in some matches to not having a full team out , but I think we just about got there ..

I think that we do need more members to be available for team selection, but then I think that we also need more club members...

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank Debbie, Christine and Neil for all of there help and input , as being new to this position I didn't know all the pitfalls !!! But I do now !!! Again thank you. ...

Our teams had a very tough season with 4 being relegated, which isn't easy to take as I know that we are all very competitive and deep down we don't enjoy losing , hopefully we can spring back next season !!!!

MENS A: 2nd

MIXED A: relegated

LADIES A: relegated

MENS B: relegated

MIXED B: relegated

LADIES B: 3rd

In the C & D tournament we had the following members as finalists

55+ mens doubles. .Martin Picker and Rob Boyd (winners for the 3rd consecutive year)..

In the friendly league tournament we had the following member as a finalist Ladies doubles. . Hayley Everett + Kim Lane (DL) unfortunately losing in a very tough match against a well seasoned pair !!!!..

I would finally like to mention the following members who had a good time at the Framlingham tournament and would encourage other members to have a go next year (contact me for details)

Neil Weston

Martin Picker

Sara Aldred

Gilly Smith

Rob Boyd

Good luck to everybody next season , and let's get some promotions on the board , and thanks for all of your efforts, and hard work and commitment. .

SA felt the external matches worked well and RL suggested that sets are played to 6 games (rather than the current 8) with a tie break if the score gets to 5 all as matches tended to go on too late into the evening. HC pointed out that any suggestions to change the number of games needed to be made to the Colchester & District League. RL pointed out that the evenings can be lengthy because of the provision of tea after match finish. SA said it was up to the Captain as to whether tea is provided or not. HH suggested maybe evening matches should begin at 6 or 6.30pm instead of 7pm? PC said that the format of matches and the provision of tea was a matter for the League to rule upon and added that there were very few unfinished matches this year. A vote was held as to whether to suggest a tiebreak at 5/5 – 9 in favour, 3 against, 2 abstentions so SA will make the proposal and HC will put it forward to the C & D League. She will also raise the fact that some clubs do not provide tea at all.

7. FACILITIES REPORT

During the year we have had the exterior of the clubhouse repainted (£630). Our lease stipulates that this should be done every five years, as a minimum. The courts have also been repainted, (£5200+vat) which should keep them playable for another three to five years. Thereafter we will need to resurface the courts and make another attempt to cure the dip behind the baseline on court 1. We also have some cracking caused by tree roots that will also need to be tackled. Early in the year I asked Tennis Court Surface Solutions to give us ball park figures for resurfacing, so that we knew what we need to budget for. To replace the tarmac courts like for like would be about £33,000 plus vat. The work to repair and stabilise the dip could be a further £10,000 plus vat. If we wanted the fence rejuvenated it would add a further £4,500 plus vat. I also asked for approximate figures for other surfaces, such as artificial grass, but they are substantially more expensive than tarmac and require ongoing maintenance.

The nets on all the courts look very tatty and the net on court one, in particular is in a very bad state. The stitching on both the headband and the band along the foot of the net has failed in places. I investigated the possibility of getting the nets cleaned and repaired. Neither the court maintenance firm, nor two net manufacturers that I contacted know of any service to refurbish and repair nets. Consequently, three new nets were bought and will be installed in the

Spring. They were bought at an end of season discounted price and I asked for, and received, a further discount for buying three (total cost £414). A couple of years ago I had the ground anchor that secures the net centre strap replaced on court 2. I am expecting the ground anchors on courts 1 and 3 to fail at some stage soon, as both are badly worn.

It was noted that Simon Underwood SU is standing down from Facilities and a replacement needs to be found.

8. JUNIOR REPORT/ DEVELOPMENT

The most dramatic event this year for Juniors was Zico's car catching fire and becoming a fireball. Thankfully he was unhurt.

Junior sessions continue to thrive. There are now 4 separate sessions on Saturdays, as one of the classes had to be split into two due to an increase in class size. University coaches from last year were unavailable in 2019 so Zico taught lessons on his own. A successful Juniors taster session on Sunday was held in July, which was open to all children, followed by a barbecue.

It was suggested to bring Zico into the Committee in order for him to have direct communication to speed up the process of organising events and seeking court usages. It was decided that there was a conflict of interest to have a member who has financial interest in the activities carried out at the club to serve on the Committee. We are still seeking someone to fill the role of the Juniors committee member.

A heated debate took place around the development of Juniors into Adult members. Whilst younger junior numbers are healthy the numbers decline as they become teenagers – if they are good they join a squad but often they just lose interest as they grow up. Whilst we need a framework to transition Juniors to Seniors Neil Weston pointed out that we need to strike the correct balance to encourage youngsters to play but not dominate the weekends when Adults are laying too. PC was passionate about getting Juniors into the club and staying in the club as he feels currently there are two distinct groups; Junior and Senior. It was pointed out that Lexden Tennis Club organises Junior tournaments which attracts Juniors from all over the region. SW suggested we ask Zico's advice. SA has been discussing the lack of Juniors with Zico and agreed it was hard to find a solution. Last year the club had a tie up with Essex University but it is hard to maintain a connection as people leave. The conclusion reached was that Zico would be invited to the next committee meeting.

9. MEMBERSHIP REPORT

MEMBERSHIP	2016	2017	2018	2019
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CATEGORY				
Family (Senior/Junior)	21(40/28)	22 (43/34)	20 (46/15)	16 (30/17)*
Individual	33	34	32	33
Intermediate	6	4	3	3
Junior/Parent(restricted)	-	8 (11/11)	7 (10/7)	11 (13/15)*
Junior	37	24	7	23
Senior Weekday	12	13	7	6
Honorary & coaches	4	6	6	4 & 3
TOTAL MEMBERS	160	180	133	147

Note: Information taken from Clubspark on 10th November 2019.

* number of adults/juniors within package

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY	Not renewed (exc those who changed category)	New (exc those who changed category)	Revenue
Family	3	3	£2730
Individual	8	4	£3457
Intermediate	1	0	£135
Junior/Parent	1	5	£55
Junior	2	8	£110
Senior Weekday	2	1	£432
			£6919

There has been a slight increase in numbers this year which is pleasing; though we are still significantly below the 2017 figures. There were some genuine reasons for not rejoining (moved away/not playing/injury) but a lot of people gave no reason despite requests to do so. The junior category shows the biggest increase which is probably due to a requirement that all those attending junior coaching become members as decided at last year's AGM; though I believe not everyone has done so. Thanks to Zico for implementing this.

It has been good to see several new members who are taking an active part in the club.

Other categories show that we are not attracting enough new, young members. The fall in family membership can be largely explained by a change in category by members from 2018 but the drop in individual members is of some concern. I am proposing a slight change in the Junior/Parent package which always causes confusion. Instead of a price per person within the package I propose

implementing an overall subscription charge of £15 which would include one adult & one (or 2?) children. Families could take out 2 membership packages if there are 2 adults wishing to play.

I repeat my plea from last year: we need to attract new members & keep existing ones – any suggestions gratefully received.

Proposals for 2020 subs is covered in the Treasurers report.

The proposal to change the Junior/Senior package was approved provided it remains easy to monitor. SA also said we need to emphasise that it is £5 per person not per family.

10. WELFARE REPORT

There was an incident on the cricket field involving a player suffering from stroke. There were issues in calling and guiding the ambulance. Learning from this incident, a poster was made and displayed so that in future it is very clear how to efficiently call for an ambulance, and how to find a defibrillator. Members are encouraged to read the procedures, or at least know where to look for the information.

Mike has stepped down as Welfare Officer and is succeeded by Steve W.

Mike once again stressed the need for adults to be DBS checked if they wish to organize more junior events. It is free unless you go to the Post office and then the cost is £5. For information, there is a defibrillator in the Sports pavilion and the key for the pavilion is on the right hand side of the door inside the Tennis Club. The alarm in the Sports pavilion needs to be disarmed. PC suggested that we have our own – the cost is approximately £900 and the LTA would fund 50%. Caroline Weston pointed out that the Arts club in Dedham has a more modern defibrillator and is released simply by a button. It requires regular servicing. The motion was passed to buy a defibrillator for DLTC and CW will oversee the project.

Sallianne Taylor has the new Secretary confirmed that the club has successfully been reregistered with the LTA which therefore allows DLTC to benefit from funding and gives access to the Wimbledon Ballot.

11. TREASURER'S REPORT

NOTE; as of Jan 16 2020 notice was given that as the accounts were checked by Debbie Sainty there is no need for an official audit.

Current bank balance as at 30th September - £925

Savers balance - £43,200

Cash - £262

I have put the financial accounts together and the figures have gone to Debbie to audit. Although we have agreed that the numbers (income and expenditure add up), she is concerned that certain payments are outstanding but not yet invoiced ie. Rent and Parish Council costs and therefore the audited figures may need to account for these.

Before any adjustments Debbie might suggest, this year's accounts are showing a loss of £2,598, compared to last year's profit of £485. However, £6,240 was spent on paint repair and binder to the courts.

Income was down £988 due mainly to subs down £315 (4.3%) and match fees down £379 (62%). Expenditure was up £4,815 due to court repairs and clubhouse painting (total of £6,870).

There are sufficient tubes of balls in hand to prevent any further imminent purchases being required.

Although match fees are less than last year, again this is a misleading figure. It excludes outstanding fees not yet paid, whereas last year's figures included fees paid from the 2017 season.

I understand that the Mens, Ladies B and Mixed Captains have not collected at the time of the matches but have left it to the end of the season. Only the Ladies A have paid before the accounting year end, and any payments received after 30th September will be included in next year's accounts.

Issues regarding payment of the match fees were given in last year's report and I agree with Janet's comments. The late payments make the accounts harder to finalise and it is not clear who is responsible for paying/chasing these.

As per last year's notes – should they become part of the membership costs for those who intend to play? Should the players be asked to make payment directly to the club account after each match? Does collecting these fees make the Captain role too onerous? Should the fees be scrapped?

Could I please remind anyone who makes payments to the club account to include an appropriate reference and where these payments are adhoc, to also let me know what they are in respect of. It has been difficult to identify some payments made during the year, particularly those made/received before I had access to the bank account.

As inflation is running at circa 1.8% I proposed these increases –

- Senior £108 (£106)*
- Weekday £73 (£72)*
- Family £183 (£180)*
- Intermediate £46 (£45)*

To inflation proof the club's savings, I believe these increases are justified.

Hilary has suggested a change in the charging structure for the parent & junior package to simplify this, which seems sensible as many members have initially paid an incorrect amount.

The bills for Essex LTA (totally £648) were paid in November 2019.

FYI, net figures for social events were quiz £218 but the ping pong appears to have made a loss of £150, although some income and costs from 2017/18 were included this year. However, the venue costs were £211 this year whilst this year's income from it appears to only amount to £78. The Ladies open made £288.

Once I managed to get added, the Barclays account has worked well for making payments.

Essentially costs are up but income is down. Richard Heath RH will remind the Captains to collect match fees. A suggestion was made to increase the match fees to £3 and not collect a fee from the Captains. Russ Sainty said this was not worth it and HH suggested simply increasing the match fee to £3 for everyone. This was passed unanimously. HH suggested ring fencing funding for special projects such as the replacement of the courts.

12. SOCIAL REPORT

A successful pub quiz earlier in the year was held with (slightly) easier questions, which raised money for the club. The format was made simple in order to make the organising easier.

There was a Wimbledon men's final viewing event at the clubhouse. It was established that there was sufficient TV signal and Sam led members to bring food and decorate the clubhouse for a nice Wimbledon experience.

Another popular Ping Pong & Pizza event was held in September, and the annual Christmas dinner will be held on 7 December at the Sun Inn in Dedham.

We are looking for replacement Social officer to work alongside Helen Main in 2020.

13. AOB

A vote was passed for the continuation of the committee whilst PC proposed to stand down as the Internal Player representative.

Finally it was suggested that the AGM move from November to a month where it might be warmer in the Sports Pavilion and also move it forward to 7 or 7.30pm rather than 8pm. Having checked the constitution, the following guidelines exist re; the AGM. 'The AGM shall be held at such a time as the Management committee shall decide each year to transact...' 'No period greater than fifteen months shall elapse between one AGM and the next'.

