

DTC AGM Minutes
Friday 11th November 2022
At 7 pm in the Dedham Sports Pavilion

Agenda (7 to 8 pm)

1. Welcome by Chair

Halford welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that, to save paper, the 'papers' would be displayed on the TV, as required. However, there were 5 copies of the Audited accounts on the tables.

2. Apologies received from Musa Diaz, Marianne Gilbert and Jill Wilson

Present: Halford Hewitt, Sallianne Taylor, Steve Watchorn, James Prior, Russell and Debbie Sainty, Hilary Cairns, Kieren McCormack, Zico Davies, Bev Collins, Simon Underwood, Angela Green, Caroline and Neil Weston.

3. The minutes of the 2021 AGM were accepted and approved.

4. Chair's Report

Reflecting on the past year, Halford pointed out that it was only in February 2022 that final covid restrictions were lifted and that as a result this year has largely been one of consolidation. However there have also been some significant attempts to move the Club forward and safeguard its future; notably, the member survey and the resulting Action Plan. The latter is an item on the agenda later.

The Chair thanked the committee for all its hard work and reiterated that, whilst the running of the club day to day is safe in their capable hands, the need for all members, not just committee members, to get involved to support and improve the Club. The Committee could not do everything on their own.

There are 3 main challenges/areas for development over the coming year are:

1. The development of facilities, namely court lighting and a path from the car park to the courts
2. The promotion of the Club and,
3. Attracting new members.

As far as Item 1 is concerned, we have finally managed to create a Lights Planning Start and Finish group of 3 committee, and 3 non-committee members who will formulate a plan to be put to the committee; they will meet before Christmas.

Item 2 - we have so far drawn a blank on finding someone to take on promoting the club through social media.

If we achieve 1 and 3, attracting new members should automatically follow.

5. Approval of Committee Members' reports (see page 4 to 7 for the complete reports).

- 5.1. **Communications** – it was noted that the Club needs more social media presence. The suggestion was also made to profile players and the Club in the Parish magazine.
- 5.2. **Internal and External Play** – it was noted that Colchester & District league will be proposing to limit sets to 6 games with tie break at 5 all. The AGM supported this as a standard for all external matches.
- 5.3. **Membership** - see proposed subscription changes below.

- 5.4. **Facilities** – it was noted that the repair to the dip has worked well but took approximately 1/5th of the Club’s reserves.
 - 5.5. **Juniors** – Zico achieved his Level 2 during the year and is currently taking his level 3 LTA accreditation. He has taken on Gracie as a qualified ‘Level 1 -distinction’ helper.
 - 5.6. **Welfare** – nothing to add
 - 5.7. **Social**– nothing to add
 - 5.8. **Treasurer**– nothing to add
6. **Audited accounts** – these were distributed prior to the AGM and the Chair thanked Debbie Sainty for her work in ensuring these were audited. Thanks were also given to Richard Heath who has now retired as Treasurer.
7. **Subscriptions for 2023/24.** A modest increase in Subs was approved, as follows:
- Family £183 - £185
 - Individual £108 - £110
 - Intermediate – will remain at £46
 - Junior parent - £15 - £17
 - Junior - £5 - £7

Comparisons were made with East Bergholt Club subscriptions, which are significantly cheaper (£83) than DTC, but it was agreed that DTC offers a different value proposition.

8. **Election and re-election of committee members.**

- Retiring:** Richard Heath and Kelly Coburn
- New, Proposed:** Musa Diaz and Bev Collins
- Existing, Proposed:** Halford Hewitt, Sallianne Taylor, James Prior, Hilary Cairns, Steve Watchorn, Russell Sainty, Zico Davis and Kieren McCormack

All proposed committee members, plus Musa and Bev, were approved. The Chair will follow up with Musa to see if she will take on the role of Treasurer.

9. **Action Plan Update and Proposals for next year** (see below, page 8 to 9).

Floodlights: following the announcement that the sub-committee will meet before Christmas, the suggestion was made to try out the portable lights belonging the Football Club.

DTC lease: Halford has found a draft but no official lease. He will contact Mike Sherring as it is believed the lease was renewed prior to his stepping down as Secretary. It is possible Nicola Baker will know so Halford will follow up both avenues.

Club sessions: Club sessions have improved but there are few participants on Wednesdays. A suggestion was made to invite juniors who want to become integrated into Club sessions to join the Wednesday session.

Hitting wall: some members felt that a hitting wall was not a good idea because balls bounce back onto courts. There was no consensus as to whether to go ahead or not so needs to be followed up by the new Committee.

Path: A reminder needs to be sent in the next newsletter that people need to change into tennis shoes ONLY when they get to the courts to avoid mud on the court. Steve to note.

Overall it was noted that the Club needs to tap into the skills of members but simply asking for help does not work. A direct approach is needed as seen with the new Lighting group. Ideas for social media savvy people are sought.

10. Motions to be put to the AGM – none received.

11. AOB

It was noted that the Tournament cups are not polished and look shabby. A suggestion was made to buy some new cups and to also provide a runners up trophy. New Committee to action.

There was also a request made to reinstate the Ladies Open Day tournament – Hilary and Debbie said here will be one this year.

Angela Green highlighted her ongoing work on the history of the Club which should be put into the Parish magazine. She and Halford will meet before Christmas to move it forward.

Open forum for members (8 to 9 pm)

This was kicked off with a visual sentiment indicator displayed on the TV drawn from the results of the survey. Alongside the desire for lights, the biggest indicators from respondents were the friendliness and welcoming atmosphere of the Club. This demonstrates that DTC does have cachet.

Club sessions dominated the debate

- **Use of WhatsApp** – this can deter some people from attending so it was decided to set up a new 'info only' WhatsApp. The existing one will be left as a 'social' communications tool and Steve will send guidelines as to the usage of WhatsApp in the next newsletter.
- **Wednesday sessions** – it was pointed out that once matches start, some members can find it hard to also join Club sessions.
- **Length of sessions** – it was pointed out that Club sessions at East Bergholt are limited to 4 games, so people change partners more quickly which mixes standards and abilities more.
- **Team attendees at club sessions** – it was agreed that Club Captains would encourage team players to attend at least 1 club session a month.
- **Start of the season** – it was agreed to kick the new season off by making a concerted effort to establish a high turnout at club sessions right from day one.
- **Social media** – Zico agreed to ask Gracie if she would help with the Club's social media presence.

First meeting of new Committee is Monday 21 November at Hilary's house.

The Meeting closed at 8.50 pm

5 Committee Members' Reports 2022

5.1 Communications (Steve and Halford)

We continue to keep members updated on latest news and information through our regular DTC newsletters and the useful WhatsApp group. We try to keep the website up to date and the booking system seems to be working well and is used by coaches, members and the public to book courts.

We recognise that we don't use social media very extensively and this is a gap we have tried to fill but have yet to find anyone in the Club to take this on.

We are working on resolving an issue with ClubSpark that means that the Newsletter and other communications only get sent to one member in any multi person memberships. Several of you have mentioned this and would like to receive any club information directly rather than through a partner or other linked member.

The members survey at the end of January was well received with 40 (23%) returns and provided invaluable insight into what members wanted and needed from their club. The results were fed back to the wider membership in February.

We always welcome feedback on the issues members would like to hear more about.

5.2 Internal & External Play Report 2022 (James Prior)

League matches - all went well with a good response to Dedham doing refreshments. All captains have done a great job by including different players and communicating on the WhatsApp group. The Mixed A team has been promoted to Division One with all other teams staying in their respective divisions which is great effort all round.

Club session organising seems to be going well but with varied numbers especially on a Wednesday.

Singles competitions - congratulations to Bev and Steve with lots of matches taking place July-September.

Doubles competitions- congratulations to Russ/Roderick and Bev/ Debbie in the men's/ladies' doubles event. Mixed event postponed to March 2023.

Henry Green Tournament was well attended earlier in the season – congratulations to the winners Musa and Robi - and there was a good turnout for the **Jubilee event**.

Winter/Next Season-

- Plan for a junior tournament next year.
- Plan for a coaching session for each team (once a month) running throughout the winter leading into next season.

- Plan for next season is to have an additional mixed Team.
- Team captains to encourage their team to attend club sessions throughout the year.
- Club tournament dates to be arranged at the start of season and advertised. Also, to consider picking your own partner so easier to organise and to get even numbers.

5.3 Membership Report 2022 (Hilary Cairns)

The table below shows the membership for the last 4 years. There has been a decline in Family Membership but otherwise figures are pretty healthy. This is especially marked in the Junior & Parent & Junior categories so thanks to Zico for encouraging those. We do ask that attendees at junior coaching become members of the club. Subscription fees were reduced twice during the year in line with previous years.

Reasons given for non-renewal are not having the time & moving away. Many people don't tell me they're not renewing or offer any explanation despite several requests to do so.

Ideas for 2023 would be to attract more intermediate members & to retain more members overall. A more active media presence & a plan towards obtaining lights would, I believe, help this.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY	2019	2020	2021	2022
Family (Senior/Junior)	16 (30/17)*	33 (65/39)*	30 (83/18)*	22 (58/13)*
Individual	33	48	43	44
Intermediate	3	3	4	3
Junior/Parent(restricted)	11 (13/15)*	15 (15/22)*	30 (34/42)*	29 (45 juniors)
Junior	23	20	37	56
Senior Weekday	6	7	9	9
Honorary & coaches	4 & 3	3 & 2	3 & 2	4 & 2
TOTAL MEMBERS	147	224	275	263

Note: Information taken from Clubspark on 17th October 2022.

* denotes number of adults/juniors within package, this may not be accurate as some people don't specify when they apply. Juniors are under 16yrs. Family membership can include "children" under 21 or 25 if they're in full-time education.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY	Not renewed (excl. those who changed category)	Last year	New (incl. those who changed category or rejoined after a break)	Last year (excl. cat. change)
Family	8 (19/9)	5	1 (5)	5
Individual	12	17	7	6
Intermediate	3	0	3	1
Junior/Parent	11 (20 juniors)	6	11 (18 juniors)	13
Junior	16	6	31	14
Senior Weekday	3	1	1	2

Total income from subs is £10,121. The committee are proposing that there is a slight increase in subs for some categories in 2023. This would be the first increase for 3 years. Family £185 (£183), Individual £110 (£108), Junior/Parent £17 (£15); no change for Intermediate £46, Junior £5 or Senior Weekday £73.

5.4 Facilities report (Russell Sainty)

It's been an active year for maintenance, with the repair of the dip on court one followed by repainting of that court being the primary achievement.

As well as moss killing and court cleaning, many repairs have been undertaken to nets, fences and posts during the year. Thanks to all who have helped.

Floodlighting: Some further investigations have been made into floodlighting of the courts. This is a sensitive issue in Dedham and the AONB.

The response by Colchester Borough Council, to our Preliminary Planning Enquiry, indicated that planning consent would be needed and also outlined some of the contentious issues which will inevitably need to be addressed in any application.

With this in mind, we have established a small group made up of three non-committee members and three committee members who will be meeting in the next few weeks to take this forward.

The development of the Dedham Sports Club (the umbrella organisation for the 5 sports clubs that use the Duchy Field) continues to gather momentum with the upgrading to the Pavilion kitchen and heating systems. The Tennis Club is actively involved in further ongoing developments to ensure the Sports Club's viability for the benefit of the wider community.

The Tennis Club continues to benefit from the generosity of Margareta De Muscote-Morris in allowing us and the Cricket Club to use her field for parking. In return, the two clubs keep the field mowed and tidy through a series of work parties during the year.

5.5 Welfare report (Steve Watchorn)

The welfare of our members remains a key priority at the Club, and we continue to promote an environment that is safe, inclusive and welcoming for all of our members.

With all COVID-19 restrictions now lifted, we are enjoying normal playing conditions and full use of the clubhouse. We keep a watchful eye on Government and LTA guidance and will respond as necessary if recommendations change.

We have had no Safeguarding issues to report during the year. Our policies remain up to date and reflect latest LTA guidance.

As always we encourage members to remind themselves how to use our defibrillator by watching [this short video](#). It is vital we know how to use this life-saving piece of kit. We will aim to provide more in-person training in 2023.

Looking ahead, we will continue to communicate proactively with members about our approach to Safeguarding and its importance at the Club.

We welcome any questions or suggestions for how we can continue to improve – please send these to stephen.watchorn@gmail.com.

5.6 Juniors (Zico Davies)

I have run holiday camps during the Easter, May half term, summer holidays and October half term. On average we see around 20 -30 children attend each session.

Saturday tennis has an average of 6-8 children in the squads and I run 5 squads starting from 4 years old up to 17. Year on year the Saturday tennis programme continues to grow.

5.7 Coaching (Zico Davies and Paul Newman)

Zico continues to run a very successful Junior club (see above) but also runs a cardio tennis session every Saturday for adults with an attendance of 4-6 people.

Furthermore, he teaches around 10-12 individual lessons a week and is working with 3 local Primary schools offering curriculum work and afterschool clubs.

Paul continues to coach adults on an individual and group basis three days a week, 40 weeks a year and has run training sessions for the teams, as well as the very successful Friday group sessions focussing on doubles play. He also strings about 30 rackets a year for club members.

5.8 Social

Last Christmas, there was a well-attended meal at the Marlborough where the Tennis Club Player of the Year Award was presented to Debbie Sainty for her exceptional contribution to the club during the year; especially in respect to running ladies' sessions, mobilising the Ladies to play in teams and her enthusiastic support for Club Sessions.

The summer social event this year was the tennis club's participation in the Jubilee Celebrations on 5th June when the club provided an open club session, speed of serve and ran a tea and cake stall. Many thanks to everyone who donated a fantastic array of cakes which raised over £90. The club purchased a speed of serve gun for the event which can be used by members at other times.

This Christmas a meal is planned for December 9th, a Quiz for 10th February and a table tennis evening for March/April. More events are to be planned.

5.9 Treasurer's report (Richard Heath)

Unfortunately, the Audited accounts are not yet ready, but they will be sent out by email as soon as they are.

We are very sorry for the delay.

Audited accounts have now been received and approved.

Action Plan Report

9.1 Background

An online survey was sent to 176 members on 22nd January 2022 with 40 responses meeting the deadline of 31st January. The survey asked members some specific questions relating to: Club Sessions; Juniors; coaching, courts, facilities, the booking systems and social events.

A section on Club Development allowed for members to respond with free text on three things members:

- valued about the Club
- would like the Club to achieve in the coming year
- would like to see changed or improved during the year

The responses provided a wealth of information to help your Committee to draw up an Action Plan for the year. The results and the Action Plan were distributed to the members on 25th February 2022.

9.2 Immediate Priorities

In our email to members on the 25th February we listed the immediate priorities ([Committee actions since then, in blue](#)) as being:

- **The Dip: fix.** This was carried out in April and the court repainted 8 weeks later. Total cost was £10,176 . It seems to have worked very well and was ready for the match season
- **Floodlights: draw up and carry out a plan to light the courts.** Step 1 was to submit a Preliminary Planning Application to Colchester Borough Council. The response arrived at the end of May. Step 2 is to come up with a planning proposal – to do this a Lights Group has been formed with three Committee members and three non-committee members. The aim is to formulate options for the Committee to decide upon. The expectation is that this will be done by the new Year. Step 3 is to put in a planning application with the support of the Dedham Parish Council. Step 4, it may be necessary to raise additional funds.
- **Club Sessions: improve/refine/increase attendance.** Several initiatives have been tried and the Club Sessions, post Covid, have reverted to the normal Sunday tea and cakes, organisers and new balls. Wednesday Sessions remain a challenge for the oncoming year
- **Results of survey and Strategic Plan: report back to members.** This was carried out on 25th February 2022.

9.2 Secondary Priorities

- **Membership: increase membership and engagement.** Membership has remained strong this year, but the Committee is concerned that, without lights, there is a risk that people will move to clubs where they have the option to play in the evenings.
- **Juniors: integration and development.** Plans are in place for sessions with Juniors who are ready to move up. First session planned for 5th November
- **Competitive success: for teams and individuals.** All Teams sustained their league position and the Mixed A won promotion.

- **Social tennis: tournaments/events held, enjoyed and well** attended. Sadly, the mixed tournament could not go ahead due to lack of players, but the aim is for it to be the Season Opener in March.
- **Committee development: active and vibrant committee.** The Committee has been very active this year. With the addition of two new members for next year and the commitment to continue the Action Plan, I think we can expect further progress and development.
- **Contribution of members: extend their engagement in developing/running of the club.** Whilst the teams have been very successfully run (and over subscribed to the point where we will be entering an additional mixed team in the leagues next year), it has proved difficult to get non-committee members to engage in running and developing the Club. This remains a challenge for next year and we specifically need a volunteer or volunteers to raise our Social Media presence.

9.3 Miscellaneous Action Plan Items

- **Social Events – set up a group of Members to help plan and organise more events.** There are already three events in the Calendar for next year and members who indicated they were willing to help in the survey will be engaged.
- **Hitting wall/ball Machine for the Club.** Costs have been reviewed and the preference is for a hitting wall as being the least complicated to manage and the most likely to be used on a casual basis, for instance whilst waiting to play. The Committee will progress this in the near future.
- **Paths to the courts.** This will link into the planning application for lights.
- **Coaching – review Coaching options.** Coaching continues to be a great success and the introduction in the near future of regular team practice sessions on a Saturday afternoon (along with the Junior/Senior sessions mentioned already) will be a development of the coaching opportunities.

9.4 Next Steps

In the new year, the committee will be formulating their Action Plan for the coming year which they will distribute to the members for comments