

Minutes of the Doncaster Lawn Tennis Club Annual General Meeting

Thursday, 22 July 2021 – 7.00 pm at DLTC, Saxton Avenue

Present

Committee: -

Chair – Martin McCarthy (MM)

Sarah Maxfield (SM), Debbie Turner (DT), Kev Waller (KW) and Tracy Wyatt (TW).

Member Representation: -

Caroline Appleyard, Martin Appleyard, Jacob Bennett, Brian Butcher, Tony Exley, Margaret Goodhead, Sean Hale, Jayne Hale, Mick Harmap, Mick Howitt, Dominic O'Malley, Scott Maxfield, Toby Mettam, Andrew McDougall, Steve Plaxton, Jake Prime, Zoe Regan, Steve Rodgers, Gordon Smith, Julie Smith, Martin Turner.

1) Welcome from the Chairman and Apologies for Absence

MM welcomed all Members to the Annual General Meeting of Doncaster Lawn Tennis Club and thanked everyone for their attendance, particularly in light of the past year, following many ups and downs as a result of the Covid Pandemic. The meeting had been organised as a hybrid meeting meaning that people could attend either in person or virtually via video conferencing.

Apologies had been received from Committee Member Helen Devy, and from Julie Hellewell.

There were a number of items on the agenda, some of which were largely for information, but the key item of business would be to get approval of the accounts for the 2020/21 Financial Year.

SM, Club Secretary confirmed that the meeting was quorate and could proceed on this basis. However, it was noted that this was only just the case, and it was disappointing to see that many members had not attended or dialled in via Zoom using the hybrid facility available to them.

2) Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Doncaster Lawn Tennis Club held on 18 February, 2021

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting for the date detailed above be approved.

3) Opening Address by the Club President, Steve Prime

MM read out the President's address on behalf of the Club President Mr Steve Prime, and the Lady President, Maureen Marsh.

AGREED that this be noted.

4) Financial Report of the Treasurer for the 2021 Financial Year

A report had been circulated with the agenda papers detailing the Clubs accounts for the 2020/21 Financial Year, and the position showed an overall loss for the 15 months from January 2020 to March 2021. Whilst this was not as positive as was hoped, it was a 15-month period due to the move in period of the financial year to align with the tennis year and therefore was not wholly comparable with previous years. However, in light of the difficulties faced by the Club due to being closed for a large part of this period due to Covid-19, there were still some positives to draw, and it was hoped that next year would be more positive.

Some key points to note from the report were as follows:

- Reductions in income were largely due to bar closures and court closures and a number of big events such as Bonfire Night and Christmas band night had not been held as a result
- despite the closures, there had been an increase in Membership income of £3242 and since April alone, there had been 126 new memberships taken out, a mixture of which were playing and social memberships, bringing more revenue into the club.
- Government Grants for Furlough and Small Business Grants had been received in the region of a total of £38k
- There had been an increase in depreciation costs
- Insurance costs had been reduced slightly due to renegotiations
- Subscriptions and Licenses had been partially suspended throughout the pandemic resulting in less costs

Members were asked, upon consideration of the report and accounts, if they were happy to give their approval to them in advance of being formally signed off with the Club's accountants, Smith Craven.

AGREED that the Doncaster Lawn Tennis Club approve the accounts for the 2020/21 Financial Year.

5) Club Coaches Annual Report

The Head Coaches, Jake Prime and Toby Mettam, had circulated their update to Members in advance of the meeting, which detailed the work undertaken by them and their Team over the past 18 months.

Following a turbulent period with lockdowns and isolation, squads had resumed in April, and it was hoped that this would now maintain some equilibrium with no further disruptions. It was noted that Summer Camps had been put into place for the school holidays which had already generated a great deal of interest, so it was hoped that these would be a success.

Members noted that the coaches were working with their Tennis Leaders and Junior Coaches, and they were pleased to report that three of their tennis leaders had now completed their

Level 1 Coaching badges meaning that the tennis offer was continuing to improve more and more.

An update was given on Junior Tennis Leagues, and it was noted that two teams were currently competing in the Sheffield District Summer League and provided great experience for some of the young players.

It was hoped moving into September after the Summer break that many young players would return to squads as well as hopefully the addition of many new players and it was a positive outlook moving forwards.

AGREED that the Coaches Report be noted.

6) Chairman's Review for the Year 2019 to 2021

MM presented his Chairman's report for the past 18 months, which had been delayed due to the ongoing impact of Covid-19. Members noted that the last two years had been a challenging period of life in many ways and MM commented that he was very grateful for the support of many people who had supported ongoing effort at the club to ensure that all Members could continue to enjoy and benefit from the wonderful facilities on offer at Saxton Avenue.

Thanks were given to Committee Members past and present in assisting him with the running of the club and ensuring decisions, sometimes difficult in nature, were taken to ensure that the maintenance and growth of the club was possible.

MM reflected on the financial challenges faced throughout the period and outlined that it highlighted the reality that a number of planned projects would need to be put on hold in the interim until the Club was in a more favourable position financially.

That said, Members heard that the Club held a lot of potential on which the Committee hoped to build in the coming months, and a number of plans were in place to hopefully capitalise on this potential. MM informed those present that the facilities at Doncaster compared favourably with many in the region and has been advised by the LTA to promote this more and more and by capitalising on the use of the club House and social aspects of the club, would in turn allow for investment not tennis and the facilities that needed improvement in this respect in order to build the membership base further and increase the use of the facilities across the board, focussing on grass roots tennis to bring members in from an early age.

MM conveyed thanks to many volunteers who had given their time to assist in the running and reopening of the club post lockdown, as well as to the former club administrator Gill Ross, and the newly appointed club administrator and bar manager, Amanda Goldspink Jones. Thanks were also given to the coaches, Jake Prime, Toby Mettam and Jacob Bennett as well as the younger coaches and tennis leaders who have worked hard to keep sessions running wherever possible throughout the period of uncertainty, and providing a little bit of normality for children and teens, where possible.

Finally, MM also thanked former Members of the Committee for their support. Mike Robinson, Julie Smith, Ged Salisbury and Dave Cole had all taken the decision to step down during the pandemic, and their support and direction was greatly missed.

AGREED that the Chairman's Annual Report be noted.

7) Election of Committee Members

Upon consideration of this item on the agenda, it was noted that no nominations had been received for any of the vacant Committee positions, one of which included the Vice Chair.

The Chairman noted that it was very disappointing to see that no nominations had been received and urged members to give the possibility some consideration. With only 6 people currently sitting on the Committee, it was increasingly difficult to do justice to the work required.

AGREED that no nominations had been received and no new appointments to the DLTC Committee were made.

8) Questions From Members

Mike Appleyard – Mr Appleyard, made a statement, thanking everyone for doing a wonderful job.

Tony Exley – Mr Exley referred to the comments by Paul Sheard from the LTA and asked if a questionnaire could be sent out to Members asking for further suggestions as to what could be done with the Club.

MM responded to this question, and stated that as a club, they definitely need to utilise the facilities better. Many sports such as tennis had plunged in popularity amongst young people, and it was important that they tried to buck the trend and promote the club post lockdown. It was noted that the club house had been redecorated, and they were looking into the possibility of using some of the courts for other sports such as netball or padel tennis.

Sean Hale – Mr Hale made a statement, and commented he was disgusted by the sheer apathy shown by Members with regard to the AGM and requested that his comments be placed on record. He had heard many people over time making negative comments about the club, and its Committee structure, but yet none of these people had made any effort to attend the meeting and raise these concerns and make their feelings known. It showed a distinct lack of respect for the people who worked on the Committee as volunteers, and they should the time to consider how difficult it could be to undertake this role. Mr Hale commented that the fact that many people could not take a short amount time out of their evenings to attend the annual general meeting was simply appalling.

Kevin Waller – KW who sits on the Committee, raised the issue of reintroducing Court Booking fees as a way of raising revenue for the Club as it could raise in the region of £1600 annually.

MM responded and agreed that this was a good idea as it would also discourage people who 'block booked' courts and then didn't turn up from doing so, which in turn prevented other members from playing. Membership fees did not cover all operating costs and it would be beneficial to add to these costs by whatever means possible as currently, the Committee did not wish to 'hike up' fees so to speak. It was moved and seconded that these fees be reintroduced as a way of generating income, and anyone who opposed this, was asked to feed back to the Committee.

Toney Exley – TE raised a further question and asked how many members had responded negatively in the past to previous decisions to introduce court fees.

MM informed TE that out of 240 adult Members, only 4 had been unhappy with the proposal.

In response to this, Scott Maxfield made a comment – He added that for £240 per year, which equated to £5 a week, Members could play tennis as much as they liked, and it was not felt too much to ask to be charged £1 per court in peak times. It was, he felt, very good value for money.

With no more questions or comments raised, MM brought the meeting to a close. He thanked everyone in attendance for coming down to the Club on what was one of the hottest nights of the year and thanked everyone who had made contributions. If anyone had any further questions or queries about anything in relation to the Club, he urged them to get in touch either with Amanda, the Club Administrator or one of the members of the Committee who would look to address their concerns.