

Minutes of the Extraordinary Doncaster Lawn Tennis Club General Meeting

Thursday 6 July, 2022 – 7.00 pm

Present

Committee:-

Chair – Martin McCarthy (MM)

Sarah Maxfield (SM), Brian Butcher (BB), Helen Devy (HD), Kevin Waller (KW).

Member Representation:-

Abdurram Abdullah, Liz Beaton, Mark Billingham, Dave Blake, Jim Bradley, Chris Brocklehurst, David Brown, Dan Butterfield, Simon Causier, Christine Carnegie, Raz Citu, Matt Clegg, Tony Exley, Dorothy Ford, Margaret Goodhead, Andy Gyte, Patricia Hopps, Mick Howitt, Darren Jones, Alan Knowles, Christian Lee, Maureen Marsh, Dominic O'Malley, Scott Maxfield, Millie Mettam, Phil Mettam, Toby Mettam, Andrew McDougall, Louise Moglia, Luke Moglia, Rick Moglia, Dominic O'Malley, Steve Plaxton, Alex Russia, Zoe Regan, Ged Salisbury, Daniel Seddon, Ragbere Singh, Louis Sylvester, Matt Sylvester, Gordon Smith, Julie Smith, Martin Talbot, Debbie Turner Martin Turner, Jim Walsh, Jonathan Warren, Kate Warren, Charlie Watson and Tracy Wyatt .

1) Welcome from the Chairman and Apologies for Absence

Martin McCarthy (MM) welcomed all Members to the Annual General Meeting of Doncaster Lawn Tennis Club and thanked everyone for their attendance.

Apologies had been received from Members Caroline and Martin Appleyard.

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 2021/22 Financial Year.

SM, Club Secretary confirmed that the meeting was quorate and could proceed on this basis.

2) Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Doncaster Lawn Tennis Club held on 22 July, 2022

AGREED that the minutes of the meetings for the date detailed above be approved as a true record.

3) Presidents Address from Steve Prime and Maureen Marsh

The President's address provided an overview of the past year, highlighting the successes of the Club and also touched upon plans moving forward.

MM thanked Steve Prime and Maureen Marsh for their continued commitment to the Club and looked forward to continuing to work with them in the coming year.

AGREED that the President's address be noted.

4) Financial Reports for 2022

MM placed on record on behalf of the Committee, their thanks to the outgoing Treasurer, Tracy Wyatt for her hard work in undertaking the role over the past 3 years, particularly during the Covid Pandemic and through the challenges the Club had faced as a result. He also formally welcomed Rachel Oleisky, acknowledged her appointment as the new Treasurer, and formally introduced her to other Members of the Club.

The Financial Report had been circulated to all Members in advance of the meeting, and the accompanying report outlined the key issues and headlines to note. It was pleasing to see, that the accounts were in a very healthy state, and moving forward it was hoped that the reserves currently held would be grown to enable further improvements to be made at the Club.

The Committee asked for formal approval by Members of the Committee of the accounts in order that these could be formally submitted for the 2021/22 Financial Year.

AGREED that the Financial Report of the Treasurer and accounts for the 2021/22 Financial Year be approved.

5) Club Coaching Annual Report

MM gave an insight into the Club Coaching over the past year. The roles of Jake Prime and Toby Mettam, the outgoing coaches, had played, had been pivotal in the success of the Club and they would be sorely missed as they moved to pursue new opportunities and MM placed on record his thanks to them both. However, in their absence, MM paid thanks to the work of Jacob Bennett and the coaches who were continuing to keep the coaching programme running smoothly whilst recruitment was ongoing for a replacement.

MM reported that the recruitment process was well underway, and Helen Devy (HD) and himself would be conducting interviews shortly. It wasn't an easy task as there hadn't been a wide range of interest, and the Yorkshire LTA had stated that club coaches were often hard to recruit. However, it was hoped that interest would be garnered and a new coach appointed in the near future.

A number of questions were raised on this issue, as it was an area of concern to many members of the Club. However, it was reiterated that they would work closely with the LTA to find a solution and in the meantime, the coaching programme would continue in a slightly reduced capacity but still maintaining the squads and sessions in the interim. Questions were put to the Committee as to whether or not it was possible to train anyone up to take on the role. However, a Level 3 coach was required and meeting this standard was no easy task. It was accepted that the Club was not in the ideal situation, but there were still some interviews to be undertaken which could prove successful moving forward.

AGREED that the update be noted

6) Chairman's Review of the Year

The Chairman's Review of the Year was noted by Members. The review touched upon the highs and lows of the past year, and paid thanks to a number of people, both paid and voluntary, who had been instrumental in ensuring the smooth running of the Tennis Club continued on a daily basis. This included thanks given to outgoing Committee Members, Tracy Wyatt and Debbie Turner as well as the outgoing groundsmen, Martin Turner, all of whom had done a great job.

MM thanked new Committee Members for their positive input already in a short space of time and it was pleasing to see new ideas and positivity brought to the table.

The report also touched upon what needed to be done moving forward and opened the channels for discussions on this in a later discussion item looking ahead to changes that needed to be made with regard to the Club's future.

AGREED that the Chairman's review of the Year be noted.

7) Election of Committee Members for 2022 to 2024

Further to the nominations received and seconded by Members of the Club for the positions due to be renewed, these were put to the vote at the meeting:-

AGREED that the following positions be appointed to:-

Chairman – Martin McCarthy

Secretary – Sarah Maxfield

Committee Members – Helen Devy, Kevin Waller and Jonathan Warren

8) Club Development – Looking to the Future

MM introduced a discussion item for Members with regard to the Club and how it hoped to move forward. It was important to get a conversation going as such in order to see where people felt the Club needed to be and what changes could be brought about to improve the running of it.

It was proposed that a questionnaire be submitted to members that aimed to seek views as to what was good, bad or ugly so to speak about the Club and where people felt things were in need of improvement. This could then be pulled together with a development plan and programme any targets and areas of work to move to.

It was also suggested that once this questionnaire had been undertaken, a meeting be held with coaches, players, parents in order to seek any further viewpoints. MM stated that it was

important to remember that it was a community facility and it needed to benefit and reflect all who used it.

There were aspirations within the Club to resurface Courts 4-6 which whilst needed and desired would prove to be a very costly expenditure which currently, the Club simply could not afford to do without further income. In terms of this, it was evident that new funding streams needed to be explored, and match funding identified. However, the Club needed to generate the initial outlay to explore these options. One proposal was to explore the possibility of transforming courts 11 and 12 into Padel Courts. It was outlined that Padel was becoming increasingly popular in its own right, and was often preferred by many players as they moved through life. Members were largely in favour of this as a proposal and support was given to seeking quotes to undertake the necessary work to transform courts. Whilst it would incur an initial outlay, it was hoped it would generate interest and income from many different areas, as Padel Courts, whilst very popular were not very widespread and therefore were well utilised.

Some robust discussions were held in terms of the aspirations people had in terms of resurfacing courts as many members felt that this was of the utmost importance and number one priority. Members felt that some of these courts were close to being unplayable altogether and consideration should be given to using funds held for this purpose. However, whilst indeed it was highly important to the Club that this was done, it simply wasn't feasible as the current time as the money simply wasn't there and the club would have to take out substantial loans to undertake this, which in the current economic climate was not advisable.

Other points raised throughout the course of the discussion included the following:-

- Increased presence in schools by coaches once new Head Coach was appointed in order to promote the sport and the club around the Borough to increase people to try the sport
- Encourage schools to use the courts for PE sessions – and provide coaching. All Schools get funding for physical education and this could be capitalised upon.
- Operating and Utility costs were increasing and bringing in additional finance through events, activities and functions was necessary in order to support this
- Boarding around the courts needed to be repaired and was in the process of being facilitated – this would provide quick improvements
- Walkway / Snicket – the Club were looking into installing lighting down the snicket to make it safer and more accommodating
- Promote tennis as a more inclusive sport – conversations had been opened with DMBC to promote use of the courts at the club through funding opportunities. The Local Authority were keen to promote this, in line with their Healthy Living Goals.

AGREED that:-

- 1) A costing exercise be undertaken for the conversion of courts 11 and 12 to Padel Courts; and**
- 2) A questionnaire be circulated to all Members of the Club to seek their views on a number of different issues relating to the Club and its facilities**

9) Resolution from the Doncaster Lawn Tennis Club Committee – Increase in Membership Fees 2023

A resolution had been included on the Agenda relating to the increase of Club Membership Fees for the 2023 Year. It was noted that these had not been increased for a number of years and in light of economic changes nationally, it was felt timely to look at this.

It was proposed that a 10% increase be applied at the start of next year, which equated to less than £5 a week. There were a number of improvements that needed to be made at the club, and none of this would be possible without increased income.

AGREED that Membership Fees be increased by 10% for the 2023/24 Membership Year

10) Resolution from Mr Singh :- 'I wish to move a resolution to prevent dogs entering the Clubhouse. This is due to a number of reasons, but largely as a result of a number of attacks by dogs on humans. Dogs in the clubhouse impact on the amenities in the Clubhouse, and a number of Members are violating existing rules by not keeping their dogs on leads and allowing them to walk around the Clubhouse unaccompanied.'

Further to the resolution put forward by Mr Singh, a discussion was held with regard to the issues raised in order to find some common ground on opposing sides in terms of this. It was agreed that not all people were happy for dogs to be around the club, but that said, the Tennis Club had always been a 'dog friendly' environment and it was hoped that this would continue to remain the case.

It was proposed that a policy be pulled together that aimed to meet the concerns of both dog lovers and those opposed to dogs and cover some middle ground. This could be circulated to Members for comments in the future prior to its approval.

AGREED that consideration be given to the development of a policy for dog owners

11) Question Time

Following consideration of all formal business on the agenda, time was given to any questions and issues raised by Members. The following points were considered in the course of the debate:-

- Removal of Trees – further to the removal of trees at the back of the tennis club, Mr Singh had raised some concerns as to how many had been chopped down. Following a

conversation with Tree Officers at DMBC, it had been **AGREED** that a number of trees would be planted in replacement for those chopped down.

- A presentation of flowers was made to Debbie Turner and Tracy Wyatt for their work on the Committee. Thanks were also placed on record to the Club Administrator Amanda Goldspink-Jones, Bar Manager, Emma Capp and the groundsman Michael Bennett for keeping everything in good working order.
- Bonfire Night – members queried if this would be going ahead. The Committee confirmed that this would take place as in previous years, and would be held on Saturday 5 November.
- Christmas Market – further to a question as to whether or not this would be held again, BB confirmed that following last year's success, it was hoped that another market would be planned again in the run up to Christmas.
- Comedy Night – BB reminded Members that the first Comedy Night at the Club would be held on Saturday 9 July, 2022, and with only 7 tickets remaining, it was hoped it would be a sell out and prove to be a successful evening that could be repeated.
- Tony Exley, DLTC Member put on record a vote of thanks to Martin McCarthy and other Committee Members. As a former DLTC Chairman, he recognised all the hard work involved and was happy to support the work carried out.