

Minutes of the DLTC Committee Meeting

Wednesday 30 November 2020 – 7.00 pm – Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Present

Chair – Martin McCarthy (MM)

Sarah Maxfield (SM), Mike Robinson (MR), Ged Salisbury (GS), Kev Waller (KW) and Tracy Wyatt (TW).

Apologies

There was an apology for absence from Helen Devy (HD)

MM welcomed Members of the Committee to the virtual Meeting via Zoom amid another national lockdown as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic, that had been put into place following the failure of the Tier System across the country to curb the spread of the virus. This had led to the Government placing lockdown restrictions across the whole of the country. This had resulted in the Tennis Courts being shut for the period 5th November to 2nd December.

1) Memberships

MM reported that the main issue he wished to address was that of Memberships, particularly now as the Club approached the end of the playing year and in advance of the renewal of Memberships for 2021.

It had been an ongoing discussion since the start of the very first lockdown in March, and it was a difficult situation to address in order to ensure that Members were fairly recompensed.

MM informed the Committee that he had looked at various options and had also done some benchmarking work across the region looking at other tennis clubs and what they had offered as well as sports clubs in similar situations including the local golf club. It had transpired that there had been a mix of approaches across the area, but by enlarge; many had not currently provided any recompense to their Members. However, it was felt that something in some way should be offered to Members as a gesture of thanks for their support throughout this time, and the years they had been members, which potentially provided different options.

TW had circulated a paper to the Committee that provided information on the options and the pros and cons of these. It was recommended despite continuing discussions on this issue that the financial year remain the same for 2021 to allow for the effects of the pandemic to show clearly in the coming months. The committee had a wide ranging discussion and it was outlined that currently, if the Club changed the financial year to April to March, it would effectively lose three months of membership fees at a time, when these were potentially needed more than ever. This in theory would be a good move to make, but not currently and would be better addressed in the future once the pandemic had subsided.

Members concurred that it was interesting that many other clubs had chosen not to recompense members but in light of the losses sustained by similar establishments across the region it was

understandable. All bars and clubhouses have remained closed for the large majority of the 2020 year due to tier restrictions and the effect on the profits of the club was huge.

TW informed the Committee, that income for 2020 was down £60k since this time last year, with £50k of that from bar takings and £10k from coaching. However, this was relative, as in comparison, spending was also down £40k. However, this still left the club £20k down on last year's position. In response to queries from the Committee, TW outlined that it was difficult to predict whether the accounts would break even or come out a loss at the current time, but the accounts were certainly not looking as positive as in previous years. However, it was acknowledged that the Club would be in a far worse position now financially was it not for the popularity and success of the bar and social side of the club. No club would now be able to survive on membership alone, and moving forward once restrictions were eased, it was acknowledged that this be further built on and developed to ensure the clubs longevity and success.

MR questioned if the incoming Membership fees in 2021 would improve the cash position and have a more positive effect. TW intimated that whilst Memberships would be positive, this money would come into the accounts in a number of different ways with many people paying by Direct Debit over the year. Additionally, there were also outgoings that had to be paid so there were many ifs, buts and maybes that could change the picture. It was asked if cash wise, the club could afford to compensate Members and whilst there were adequate reserves in the accounts, these would have to cover other costs, including the repayment to the Sinking Fund which was a concern, as annually in January, £23k was transferred to this to ensure there were relevant funds in this.

MM acknowledged there were a number of financial pressures and a brief discussion was held as to what realistically could be lost and what gesture could be made. Options were looked at as to whether a survey could be circulated to Members, as to ascertain their views, but the Committee were in agreement that this would be problematic. No two Members would ever have the same view and with every possible option, there would likely be some dissent, as it was very difficult to ensure that something met with every individuals view.

As a result of the discussions held by the Committee and the concerns voiced, MM proposed that a 10% reduction for the 2021 fees be offered as a gesture of goodwill that Members could choose to take up if they saw fit, or alternatively could choose to pay the full amount to the club.

This was felt to be a fair gesture and whilst it was not a total refund of fees for the weeks when the Club had been shut, it provided Members with a fair and appropriate gesture of goodwill and thanks.

The Committee AGREED that the offer of a 10% reduction would be communicated to Members and if there were any dissent on the decision, as a Committee it would be brought back for further discussion and put to the vote.