

FORMBY LAWN TENNIS CLUB

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD IN THE CLUBHOUSE ON TUESDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2018

Present: Mr P Collinson (Chairman & Hon Treasurer), Mrs D Johnston (Hon Secretary), Mr S Halstead (Club Captain), Mr G Niepel (Hon Membership Secretary), Danny McShane (Club Coach), 5 Committee members, 1 Life Member, 3 Associate/Country members and 20 Full Members.

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone in attendance.

1. **Apologies:** Mr P Brereton, Mrs A Seddon, Mr & Mrs I Gardiner, Mr R Dodd, Mrs P Worrall, Mr M Ansdell, Mrs G McGibbon, Mr A Parr and Mr N Linacre.

2. **Minutes of 2017 AGM:**

Copies of the Minutes of the 2017 AGM held on 14 November 2017 have been made available on request and in the Clubhouse and were taken as read. They were signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting. Proposed by Mrs M Lyons, Seconded by Mr S Halstead.

3. **Matters Arising:**

Heating has now been installed. Windows have been double glazed, new fire doors and insulation have all been installed.

The speed bump on the entrance driveway has been checked and is the correct height to limit speed to 5mph.

4. **Hon Treasurer's Report for the Year Ending 30 September 2018:**

Like last year the annual accounts are in two formats and they are both available for your perusal. The official accounts have been audited by Mike Ansdell and the club would like to thank Mike for his help with their preparation.

Although our income is lower than last year, we have still been able to increase our capital by just over £5,000. Our expenditure has also reduced. This is partly due to our electricity bill where we are still, according to our supplier, in credit!

This saga goes back over 2 years ago when we were hit by a lightning strike. Various emails followed from Paul Brereton asking our supplier to look at the meter as it wasn't recording our usage correctly. They continued to assure us that the readings were accurate.

I took up the baton when Paul was in America asking them to confirm that our meter was not damaged, and the readings correct. I was told that they didn't recognize me as their contact so were unable to look into my "complaint". I rang them up and explained that we thought we owed them money and the authorised contact was in America. After nearly an hour going through various departments, I thought I had found someone who could use common sense to bypass the security system in their computer.

He said that they could send an engineer out without Paul's authorisation to check out the meter."Oh, thank you so much" I responded. I was just about to hang up when I said "Will you send an email so we know when to expect the engineer and we can make provision for access to the meter ".Of course Sir, not a problem.

Would you like my email address, I asked?? Silence.

We can only send the email to the authorised contact

There's a hole in my bucket.

You may worry that the supplier (Extra energy) will eventually recognise that the club owe them a great deal of money - this is called back billing. However, the new rules from Ofgem (the regulatory body) protects customers like us who have tried to resolve the disputed bill and they can only back bill for 12 months. This rule comes into force in November and when we are sure that we are not liable, we will again ask our supplier to check the meter. Our reserve fund is available as a provision in case this information is incorrect.

There are no legacies left to the club this year, but the committee would like to make you aware of the fact that F.L.T.C. is registered as a charity and as such, any legacy left to the club would be free of any inheritance tax.

We are listed as a C.A.S.C. (community amateur sports club) and our charity tax reference number is CH 1686. Any money left to the club in your will would therefore be free of any inheritance tax which currently stands at 40%. So please give this some consideration and thwart the tax man! Even a small amount would make a difference, so I would urge you to look at this option next time you talk to your financial adviser.

Our membership numbers have declined again in line with the national trend and we are continually discussing ways of promoting our club to the good people of Formby. This year with the help of our captain Simon Greening, we took a stand at the Formby Festival which did bring in some new members and we will continue to strive in our effort to bring new blood into this wonderful club of ours.

The other areas where we have seen a reduction in income are the tennis programme where fewer members have embraced tennis Xpress, the bar where everyone should ignore the 14 units per week by drinking to excess and the summer ball which did not take place this year but will next year on Saturday 6th July.

The misc playing figure includes the defibrillator pads which the club provides in the case of an emergency.

Over the last few years we have invested heavily in the infrastructure of the club, namely the improved car park, the new Noble shed and the improvements to the clubhouse which include new windows, insulation and the heating. We have also undertaken some project work. This has included updating our signs and a new shed at the back of me to replace the wooden shack which is about to fall over.

Our sinking fund stands at £80,000 so we would hope that by the end of this decade we will have reached our target of £100,000 which we will need to replace our existing courts. These courts are still in good condition and we estimate that they will last for at least another 7 years and maybe longer.

Apart from a small investment to put new floors down in the changing rooms, our plans for next year will not include any major projects.

You may wonder about the space which the grass courts used to occupy. The long-term plan is to build 2 new courts, but this is a long way off. Two new courts will cost £100,000 which is a vast amount of money to find. The most we could expect in the form of a grant from the L.T.A. would be in the region of £20,000 and this is by no means a given, as we have to jump through a huge number of corporate hoops to achieve grant status. With a backdrop of a falling membership, which is a worrying national trend, it would need a compelling argument to finance such an undertaking. We should also be mindful that our perimeter fencing will need replacing some time in the future as will the floodlights.

But our financial resources and structure are the envy of most clubs and we are well placed for the future years to come.

Questions invited from floor.

Mr Newell inquired if Gift Aid on subscriptions would be worth looking into. Mr Collinson suggested Mr Newell might like to investigate this on behalf of the Club.

The Accounts were proposed by Mrs S Johnson and seconded by Mr G Niepel and signed by Mr Collinson.

5. Captain's Report

I can't believe that another 12 months in the life of Formby Lawn Tennis Club has gone by. Once again 2018 was blink and you've missed it but at the same time it feels to me like a huge amount has been crammed into a year and the club has achieved a lot. It's been my second year as captain for the tennis club I joined 30 years ago this year and once again it has been a privilege to work alongside the rest of the committee.

So what have been some of the highlights from the last 12 months? The club tournament was once again a huge success and I want to say a massive thank you to everyone who took part, everyone who came down to support the players on finals' day and also Phil Gray for organising it and being the person hounding everyone to play their matches. Ask me and the stand out match was probably the men's singles plate. Ask anyone else and it was the irritatingly long final that stopped Graeme Sharp getting on with the barbecue. Picking up trophies were Garry Henwood, Phyllis Bentham, Ian Truman, Sara Berqvist and Sally Aspinwall. And I posed for a picture with the Silk Cut trophy Formby won about 100 years ago that weighed a ton.

There was success and general good fortune all round in both leagues this season. All the teams in the Southport and Formby District League stayed-up heading into next year. In the Liverpool Men's League, the A team won section G, the B team stayed-up and for the first time there was a team in the Liverpool Ladies' League who straight away got promoted to section D just half a point behind Blundellsands. The presentation night at the West Lancs Golf Club in September was well-attended where Formby also picked up the Eric Worthington Plate for mixed doubles following a win over Liverpool League rivals Cressington a few weeks earlier.

Way back in May, the Captain's Invitation was held and it was a chance for all new members to come down and play, meet the existing members and realise that Formby Lawn Tennis Club isn't a scary place despite all the security protocols. There was nearly a 100% increase on attendance from last year because Liverpool and Everton weren't playing and a number of members showed that they could easily be contestants on "The Great British Bake Off" with the standard of goodies they brought down for people to munch on in between games. We also tried something new for the first time this year and got involved in the Formby Festival to try and swell the ranks. We got a handful of new members signed up and it's great to see how quickly newbies become part of the furniture and throw themselves into all the activities the club offers.

Aside from all that there has been club night, junior club night, the junior tournaments, the Goblin, the end of season American social and all the other great nights that Gerry has been behind organising at the club, all of the coaching activity, and heading into the winter something brand new...

It is very easy to hang up your tennis racket once the summer season is over and then pick it up again once talk of next year's teams starts up but thanks to an initiative of Debbie's that Danny has run with, an incredible 48 people each week have been involved in the intra tennis league that has been running on Tuesday nights. It's been fun and competitive and the second set of matches will kick off next week and I know it is going to put the club in a great position going into next season.

It's only when you write everything down that you realise just how busy and vibrant and active the club has been over the last year. I want to end by saying a massive thank you to everyone I serve on the committee with who work so hard month in month out to make this club the envy of so many others. And everybody else who helps out behind the scenes. If you have an idea for how to make Formby Lawn Tennis Club even better, get involved and make it happen! 2019 is going to be another great year for your club.

6. Coach's Report

This year the coaching team have run several different successful coaching programmes. These include:

Junior Squads x 3 courses over the year. These vary from U10s all the way up to U16's. These groups are always popular - particularly amongst the little ones - and we hope to put on some more sessions next year. Adults Match Plays - from end of league season to start of new season - we average around 16-20 people attending these sessions every week. These are just doubles match play sessions organised by myself. Anyone is welcome. Tennis Xpress x 3 courses - beginners sessions take place on Monday's and advanced sessions on a Thursday. These sessions have been very popular and pretty much fully booked up all year round. Junior Club Nights - April - September - Margaret has again run these sessions with great success and hopefully will continue to do so for another year or so. Cardio Tennis - runs throughout the year on Tuesday and Fridays typically. These sessions are pretty well attended and also help contribute towards the clubs earnings. Individual lessons - Between myself and Joel we do on average around 30-40 hours worth of coaching each week. This just goes to show the interest in all of our members to improve upon their tennis.

2 junior tournaments - start of season and end of season - we run 2 junior tournaments over the year due to the ever increasing demand of competitive play amongst are juniors. This shows in our junior teams which I'll come on to.

Winter League - We started a new winter doubles league in late September which has been a massive success. Hopefully these sessions will help our adults teams in their quest for promotion next season. Congratulations must go to Debbie for coming up with the idea. These sessions will continue to run for the time being. Going forwards we are going to run these sessions on 4 courts instead of the full 6 to allow for any members who don't want to play in the league to play socially on the remaining 2 courts as part of adults club night.

All of the above sessions have helped turn over a profit of £2088 for the tennis club.

Coaching Team Currently there is just myself and Joel working together on the coaching team. We may look to utilise Ollie Morris as and when required as he has now returned from Tennis coaching work in Camp America. Between us we are covering all of the coaching sessions that take place at the club.

Junior Teams As a club we entered 4 junior teams into the Southport and district leagues with our U16 girls team coming 2nd in their league. We are already looking towards adding more teams next season due to the ever increasing demand from our junior section. Margaret Lyons has run the junior club nights throughout the course of the year which has been a huge achievement and have also helped us attract a number of new junior members to the club. There have also been a number of adult helpers who have kindly volunteered their services throughout the year. We as a club would like to say thank you for this and hope you will continue to support these sessions with your help.

Junior Tournaments This year I have organised two junior tournaments (start of season and end of season). This keeps the juniors playing throughout the winter and summer months. Both of these tournaments were extremely popular and we plan to continue running the two tournaments again next year.

Schools Coaching We are now actively coaching in all of the primary schools and high schools in Formby. We offer Tennis coaching to all year groups at all of these schools and work closely with these schools to try and encourage more kids to come and play tennis and hopefully join our club.

Plans for 2019 More Cardio....Due to the ever increasing popularity of cardio tennis we will be looking at putting on extra sessions in the daytimes and evenings where possible.

Intra Schools competition....I have already been liaising with a number of the primary schools in the area. We are looking into the idea of running a yearly competition between all of the primary schools in Formby. Ideally it would be nice to run this competition at the club itself as it will hopefully attract some new members and generate some positive publicity around the club.

Mens & Women's Singles League....Finally we are looking into the possibility of organising a men's and women's internal singles league as I have had a number of requests about this. We do a lot of doubles at the club and I'm aware that there is an increasing interest in some singles play.

There were no questions.

7. Chairman's Report

We have had a reasonably good year with mixed success for our league teams, improvements to our facilities (including a warm clubhouse), a greater participation in our activities but a small fall in membership numbers. Overall there is plenty of optimism and energy within the club to carry us through into next year.

It is rare to inform you that anyone has been a member at our club for fifty years but even rarer to report that this person has worked tirelessly over these years to the benefit of our club. His boyish enthusiasm is infectious and without him, the club would not be as you see it today. He will not want me to trumpet his achievements, nor does he enjoy the praises that we should heap upon him, but I cannot let this occasion go past unnoticed. It is therefore my great pleasure to award Gerry Niepel with this plaque in recognition of his unbelievable contribution to our club. Step forward Gerry and receive the applause. For those of you who cannot see the inscription, it reads,

"Gerry's Bar, a loyal and outstanding member for over 50 years"

I know that if this was a football stadium, we would name one of the stands after Gerry, but the bar area will have to suffice.

A great deal of time and effort has been spent on updating and incorporating new policies which the LTA have insisted on. These can all be viewed on our website which is so successfully managed by Christian Bryan. The web site is our shop window and we are indebted to Christian for all his hard work and continual updating. Talking of new policies.....

GDPR If you don't know what this is let me inform you that it is not a defunct railway operator, but a decree from the soon to be forgotten European Union – or not! We have spent countless hours spent trying to interpret what some bureaucrat in Brussels has decided to foist on us. This has replaced the data protection act and if we were to follow it to the letter we would not be able to contact any member who has not opted in. This is a nonsense, so we have adopted a common sense interpretation and trust this will suffice. I won't bore you with the details but to give you a flavour of what we came across were the following 2 statements on their help list;

"Use clear, plain language that is easy to understand."

Followed by,

"Give granular options to consent to independent processing operations"

On a more serious note, the new law insists that we have to offer the facility for members to unsubscribe from emails. You are of course at liberty to do this but please be aware that if you unsubscribe, we will not be able to send you details about changing the code number

on the gate for access, tournaments, social events, tennis talk and important notifications such as the AGM.

While we are on the subject of administration, please can we ask all of you to opt in to the Wimbledon ballot? It is so frustrating to note that only half of our membership have spent what only takes 2 minutes to update their LTA membership. As a result of this apathy, the allocation of our tickets for Wimbledon will be severely depleted.

Congratulations to the members of our Ladies Liverpool League with Simon Bentzen using his energy to organise and lead our teams to success. And as already mentioned, our thanks to our club captain Simon Greening and all the team captains for their incredibly hard work this season.

I would like to thank all the committee members for their commitment this year and I am delighted that the team will remain in place for next year. I don't like to single anyone out from the committee, but I will make an exception with Phill Gray who has been involved in so many aspects of the club. In between running the club tournament, he has also found time to assemble a new shed which sits at the back of the clubhouse. His commitment and exuberance have generated a new-found enthusiasm throughout the club and he is an example to us all.

An illustration of this spirit has been the incredible response to the intra winter league, the brainchild of Debbie and run so effectively by Danny. It has been an amazing success and enjoyable for everyone who has played. We did not forecast the response and thought that we would only need 4 courts leaving two free for clubnight. However the response has been terrific, resulting in all the courts being used, but starting next winter the intra league will run on Wednesday nights, leaving courts free for Tuesday clubnight.

The glue that is Debbie Johnston holds us together while the success of junior club night continues under the wonderful leadership of Margaret Lyons supported by the very able Sue Johnson.

Paul Brereton is in America at the moment, but his tireless workload continues to amaze me. If he isn't sorting out our clubspark queries or fixing something, you can find him 40 foot in the air on the top of a cherry picker changing the floodlights.

I have mentioned most of the members who help run this wonderful club of ours but if I have left anyone out, my apologies. If there any other members attending here tonight who would like to offer their help in any way, then please let us know. This is your club and when visiting teams arrive, nobody will tick you off for welcoming them or helping to lay out the refreshments and tidying up afterwards. We are a friendly bunch and no more so than when we play our friendlies. The organiser Andrew Hewitt puts in a huge amount of time and effort into these matches so many thanks Andrew.

There is a lot of work undertaken behind the scenes. Most of you will have heard of Tennis Mark which was formerly known as Club Mark. The LTA in their wisdom have replaced Tennis Mark with M.R.R. This is not a new type of flu jab and stands for Minimum Registration Requirements. This became effective as from 1st October 2018.

This new regulation is not something that clubs should strive for (as was the case with Tennis Mark) but a directive that must be adhered to if the club is to retain its affiliation to the LTA.

So it looks like Brexit in reverse. If we don't comply with the MRR, we cannot be affiliated to the LTA. This would affect us in many ways including no Wimbledon ticket allocation, no insurance and no access to Clubspark.

Fortunately, we do comply, and the main areas are as follows;

Safeguarding officer and procedure document/Risk assessment

Diversity and equality policy/Whistleblowing policy/Appeals policy

This has involved a huge amount of work and again is an example of the world we live in where the threat of litigation means that we must have policies for every possible scenario.

Finally, I want to take you back in time to the 1980's when the committee at that time decided to install a payphone in the clubhouse. This of course was before the advent of mobiles and other such contraptions which make communication so easy nowadays. The payphone stood proudly at the entrance to the clubhouse for only one week before someone ripped it off its moorings and took the 80p from the cash slot. Because of this vandalism, the committee at the time did not replace the apparatus.

Now fast forward 34 years when I received a shame faced telephone call from an ex junior member owning up to this delinquent behaviour. He apologised profusely and has reimbursed the club with 80p plus an extra £100 for the damage.

It's not too late for any other members to come forward with their confessions!

There were no questions.

8. Rule Change

There has been increasing difficulty organising the provision of free balls and policing the high loss of available tennis balls, therefore, the Committee wish to change Rule 34 "Rule 34: From 30 April until 30 September in each year, balls shall be provided by the Club for the members during the hours of Club play."

to **"Rule 34: The Club will provide tennis balls for Senior League Matches, Friendly Matches and Finals Day. Provision of balls for any other event will be at the discretion of the Committee."**

This was proposed by Simon Halstead and seconded by Mrs P Bentham. All present agreed.

9. Subscriptions

The Committee has recommended an increase in subscriptions for 2019 season

Full	£215	Reward for Early Payment	£175
Young Adult	£115		£ 95
Junior	£ 98		£ 80
Country	£ 41		
Associate	£ 23		
Under 8	£ 30		
Under 8 (child of member)	free		
Family Membership	£450	Reward for Early Payment	£380
Temporary	£30 per month		
Visitors	£6.00		
Junior Visitors	£3.50		

This was proposed by Mrs S Johnson and seconded by Mrs M Lyons. All present agreed.

- 10. Election of Life Member:** In recognition of long service to the Club, the Committee wish to offer Richard Newell Life Membership. This is proposed by Mrs D Johnston and seconded by Mr P Collinson. Mr Collinson gave a recap of Mr Newell's work at the club: "One of the more pleasant duties I have to perform is to recommend to the members the appointment of a new life member. Life membership is awarded to those members who over the years have contributed to the running of the club and undertaken duties nobody else would want to do!"

The nomination tonight is for Richard Newell. Richard was our treasurer from 1982 to 1996 a remarkable total of 14 years. This was in the age of quill and parchment, and without the aid of a computer auto sum on a spread sheet with all transactions carried out in long hand. Richard was also Chairman in 1980 and has always been a very active member of our club organising friendly competitions on Bank Holidays in the days when members chose to play tennis rather than sit in traffic jams.

Every club needs a guardian of the rule book. Thanks to Richard's careful eye for detail, he has been of enormous help over the years using his experience and expertise to guide the club through some tricky periods. Richard will be the first to acknowledge that he was never in the top echelon of competitive tennis, but I can tell you that in 1981 he won the Men's handicap doubles! Regretfully Richard has hung up his racquet due to injury and we will all miss the all whites star of Thursday afternoons. All those in favour.

All present in favour.

11. Election of Officers and Committee Members for 2019

The following are duly elected having been proposed and seconded:

Chairman	Peter Collinson
Captain	Simon Halstead
Vice Captain	
Ground & House	Paul Brereton
Sub Committee Chair	
Hon. Secretary	Debbie Johnston
Hon. Treasurer	Peter Collinson
Hon. Membership Sec.	Gerry Niepel
Hon. Match Secretary	Christian Bryan
Asst. Hon. Treasurer	to be kept vacant
Committee Member (1 year)	
Committee Member (3 years)	Tim Colocott
Committee Member (3 years)	Peter Knowles
Hon Auditor	Michael Ansdell

12. Any Other Business

- i) Mr I Johnston "With regard to declining membership, what can the Club do?" Mr Collinson responded that a Brainstorming session is planned for the 2019 Committee to cover advertising, social media etc to increase general awareness of the club. Decreasing memberships are a national trend, however FLTC is looking at initiatives to halt this at our Club.
- ii) Mr Niepel proposed a vote of thanks to Mr Collinson for all his hard work at the Club throughout the past year.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.46pm.