

FORMBY LAWN TENNIS CLUB**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD IN THE CLUBHOUSE
ON TUESDAY, 12 NOVEMBER 2019**

Present: Mr P Collinson (Chairman & Hon Treasurer), Mrs D Johnston (Hon Secretary), Mr S Halstead (Club Captain), Mr G Niepel (Hon Membership Secretary), Joel Donnelly (Club Coach), 6 Committee members, 1 Life Member, 2 Associate Members and 24 Full members.

The chairman welcomed those present to the meeting.

1. **Apologies:**

Mr P Brereton (Hon Ground & House Chairman), Mr M Seddon, Mrs A Seddon, Mr R Newall, Mrs T Worrall, Mrs H Ansdell, Mr M Ansdell, Mr A McGibbon, Mrs U Gribble and Mr T Colocott.

2. **Minutes of 2018 AGM:**

Copies of the Minutes of the 2018 AGM, held on 13 November 2018 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 Mr Collinson, seconded by Mrs M Lyons.

3. **Matters Arising:**

There were no matters arising.

4. **Hon Treasurer's Report for the Year Ending 30 September 2019:**

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

I am delighted to report that we have had a good year. Our income is up by nearly £10,000 mainly due to successfully appealing to our insurance company about the repairs to our floodlights. It was also helped by an increase in the income from subscriptions for the first time in many years. As a result, our capital has increased by over £20,00. The saga about the electricity bill continues and we are still awaiting a rebate from our supplier for over £1,000. Once this has been satisfied, we will contact them again about our usage, which as you can see is somewhat on the light side (I do apologise for the pun).

You may worry that our supplier (Scottish Power) 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. We have enough in reserve to cover this.

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.

Technology has advanced in the last few years and with it, the way we pay our invoices. Traditionally, all invoices were paid by cheque which required two authorised signatures. The cheques were posted out which in itself carried a cost both in time and in postage. If I look into my crystal ball, I can see a day not too far away when the banks will charge for processing all cheques. With this in mind, the committee have discussed this subject and agreed to allow the treasurer to send direct payments by bank transfer. I should add that

all transactions are recorded in the cash book which must tally with the bank statement. The bank statement is produced at the monthly committee meetings for scrutiny and signing off, and of course the accounts are subject to an audit at the end of the year. 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. This year we have installed new flooring in the ladies and gents changing rooms which is a vast improvement on the black and white lino that has been there since Gerry was a teenager. We have also erected higher netting on the perimeter of court six in an effort to reduce the danger to our members from cricket balls being hit over from the cricket club. After some consultation and negotiation, the cricket club agreed to pay towards the cost of this important safeguard. Our sinking fund stands at £90,000 and we are well placed to reach our target next year 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. 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 in excess of £100,000 which is a vast amount of money to find. We would also have to look at installing floodlights which again would be substantial outlay. The LTA have changed their funding model which does not now include grants and to receive any sort of funding, we would have to open up our club to a pay and play policy which is not a route our members and committee would like to embrace. With a national backdrop of a falling membership, it would need a compelling argument to finance such an undertaking. We should also be mindful that our perimeter fencing will need replacing sometime in the future as will the floodlights which are 30 years old.

Talking of floodlights, we are continuing to discuss how to replace our existing lights. It is felt that the way forward is to replace them with LED, but it is also clear that LED usage to light the courts is a relatively new innovation and it may be prudent to wait until their usage has been evaluated and hopefully reduced in price. Moreover, the cost of installation and conversion will be to the tune of thousands of pounds.

There are still arguments about whether our existing poles can support the extra weight of LED and the LTA say we also have to apply for planning permission for a 'non-material amendment to the existing planning consent'. The costs of installation have to be weighed against the life of the new system and the illumination level.

The overview balance sheet is self-explanatory apart from one or two exceptions which I will detail now.

Rebate – successful insurance claim for damage to floodlights

Donations – cricket club for protective netting

Floodlights – see rebate!

Projects – Netting and new flooring in the changing rooms

Legal – change of trustee

Tennis Balls – more tennis and balls ordered at end of this year

I will finish by saying that our financial resources and structure are the envy of most clubs and we are well placed for the future years to come.

5. **Captain's Report:**

Can you believe it's just 43 sleeps to go until Christmas! Where has the year gone? And is there a better way to celebrate your birthday than with an AGM? If there is I'm being kept from it against my will! But, at least there's heating in the clubhouse now so you can hear what's going on above the chattering teeth. And there's WIFI, so you can tweet along live using the hashtag #FLTC AGM OMG BTW IMO NYOB

It's time to look back over another year in the life of Formby Lawn Tennis Club. You'd think it would be easy to remember when this once-a-year event is happening, but thanks to three reminders from Debbie wanting to proof-read what I'd written, this was cobbled together in Bucharest last night over a lovely glass of Fetească Neagră.

Like the wine, was 2019 a good vintage for the club? It's certainly going to be a year that we are not going to forget. It's been my third year as captain for the tennis club I joined over 30 years ago and it has been a privilege to work alongside the rest of the committee. There have been some tough times, but the year has ended with some huge highs. The low moments made everyone double down on what makes this club great and why we are the envy of many other local clubs and I would just like to thank Peter for everything he has done for this club over the last twelve months.

Another year has gone and it feels to me like a huge amount has been crammed into it. So what have been some of the highlights from the last 12 months? The club tournament was once again a huge success with a massive number of members taking part. You know it's been successful when the ladies' singles draw doesn't start with the final. WhatsApp came into its own in helping to arrange matches and a massive thank you to Peter Knowles for helping to keep it all on track. Thanks to everyone who played, supported finalists, bought cakes or sausage rolls down and umpired. There were loads of new names going on trophies which is always great; the winners were Brett Bienias, Alan McGibbon, Rob Dodd, Mia Shalliker, Phil Gray, Sara Berqvist, Oscar Davidson, Nigel Linacre, Debbie Johnston, Harriet Ansdell, Peter Knowles and Jane Granger. Oh and one other; the record-breaking ladies' singles champion Katy Bentzen.

There was tonnes of success in both leagues this season as well. The third team in the Southport and Formby District League won their division and got promoted alongside the fourth team. In the Liverpool Men's League, the A team won section F, the B team won section I and the Liverpool Ladies' League secured back-to-back league wins to head into section C next year! The presentation night at the West Lancs Golf Club in September was an incredibly well-hosted affair (even if I say so myself) where the Liverpool Ladies' team also picked up a special award for losing the fewest games across the entire season.

Aside from all that there has been club night, junior club night, the junior tournaments, the Goblin, some incredible social nights that Gerry has been behind organising, all of the coaching activity, and as the nights draw in, building on the success of last year, the first half of the club's winter league has finished which will be kicking off again in the new year to encourage people not to down tennis-rackets out of season! And there is also the Liverpool League's first crack at an autumn league so that come mid-August there is still competitive tennis to be played.

And for now, at least, that's the last time I am going to have to do this in my capacity as captain.

It's only when you have to sit down and think back over twelve months and write everything down that's been going on that you realise just how busy the club has been over the last year. I'm still going to be looking after the Liverpool League teams but whoever takes over from me as club captain is in for a treat because the people who I serve with on the committee make the job an absolute joy. Changing work commitments mean I won't be able to give the job my all and that's not fair on everyone else. I have so many great memories from my three years and maybe the next captain will achieve something I never managed to; their own space in the car park! No question 2020 is going to be another great year for the club.

6. **Coach's Report:**

Mini Tennis / Junior Tennis:

There have been several junior squad sessions throughout the year. These include 10 and under squads, 14 and under squads and an 18 and under squads. Across these three sessions alone, close to fifty children have attended each term. These sessions are currently running until mid-December and I plan to run them in the next year.

In recent months, I have also started to run a tots tennis, designed for younger children. Unfortunately this session has not proved as successful as the ones before mentioned, however, I am hoping to increase the numbers in the new year and when the weather improves.

Once again Margaret has run these sessions with great success despite initially having to change the date to accommodate my diary. The numbers were consistently in the twenties and the sessions were a great success. This led to the extension of the Junior club night season to mid-October. Parents often made comments about the excellent value for money that the sessions offered and the good balance of games and competitive ladder matches on offer on the night. I would like to personally thank Margaret, Bill and all of the volunteers that help organise and plan this night for the juniors. Long may it continue.

Junior Tournament:

The pre-season junior tournament has already taken place and the second junior tournament of the year is currently still being played. It was cancelled a couple of weeks ago due to bad weather and matches have still not been played with the half term break and recent rain.

Summer / Half –Term Tennis Camps:

Tennis camps ran throughout the whole of summer with great success. I sought help of two assistants at times as the numbers were so high. Half-Term tennis camps were also a great success and ran for most days of the holidays. These provide an excellent opportunity for parents to still work and keep their children busy. They also provide a great platform for children to mix with kids from different schools and play tennis for six hours in a single day.

Cardio Tennis:

Cardio tennis sessions have ran throughout the year – rain or shine. These sessions have been well attended, especially in recent months. These sessions run on a Wednesday afternoon and a Friday morning, with a Sunday morning session starting last week. These sessions are regularly fully booked and as such, there may be scope for adding more sessions into the clubs calendar.

Winter League:

The FLTC intra club Winter League started on the 2nd October and has now taken a break for Christmas and New Year. There was huge demand to play on a Wednesday evening with over 60 people expressing an interest and over 50 people playing throughout the six weeks. These sessions will provide the club's members a reason to come down in the winter and make the most of their annual membership keeping their eye in over the winter for the forthcoming season.

Coaching Team:

Currently there is just myself and my good friend, Chris Parkes working together on the coaching team. Chris only coaches on a Sunday and is going to re-assess his position in the New Year. He currently works 7 days a week as he is the head coach of another tennis club and I think he deserves a day off!

I am currently covering all of the 'club rain' sessions that take place at the tennis club, as well as coaching individual lessons.

2020 Plans:

Continue the ever popular junior squad training sessions throughout 2020.

I mentioned earlier, but there is demand to increase the number of cardio tennis sessions offered at the club.

With the help of Margaret, continue to offer a Friday night junior club night for all of the junior members.

I have also offered to help the club/ team captains in selecting teams and potentially assisting and running team practice / training sessions.

Winter League to continue from January. Proof every game counts!

Current standings are: 1st Team 4 (262 points), 2nd Team 2 (262 points), 3rd Team 3 (227 points), 4th Team 1 (219 points). Proof every point counts!

There were no questions for the Club Coach, however everyone involved in the Winter League agreed it was a great success.

7. **Chairman's Report:**

We have had a fantastic year! Subscription income is up for the first time since the 125 celebrations, funds are up by over £20,000, there was a huge entry into the club tournament and 5 of our teams gained promotion!

I would like at this stage to acknowledge our thanks to everyone who helped organise the successful club tournament this year and congratulate Katie Bentzen as our youngest ever winner of the Ladies Singles.

There is a real buzz about the place with more tennis being played by more people in line with the L.T.A's target of growing the game. Another good barometer to gauge the club's buoyancy is our social events which have been so well attended this year under the watchful eye of our very own Peter Pan, Gerry Niepel.

Quite an achievement. Despite one issue swallowing up the oxygen from the running of the club, we have been able, with a huge amount of hard work, to record a truly successful season and I am grateful for all the support from our committee.

The treasurer has already talked about the monetary aspect and your captain has given his report on the success of the teams. On this note, the club would like to thank Simon who is standing down this year after 3 years at the helm. All our captains do a fantastic job and they too deserve our thanks.

This leaves me with the chance to talk about our plans for the next 12 months.

We are rejuvenating the wooden floor at the back of the clubhouse on Thurs/Friday 28th/ 29th November. This part of the clubhouse will be closed and there will be no changing or toilet facilities for these two days. We are sure that this slight inconvenience (sorry about the pun) will be worth it.

A project we have been looking at is to optimise the areas around the courts to make watching the tennis more enjoyable. This will include extending the paving area around court four and cutting back the height of the wonderful display of shrubs in the front of the clubhouse. We are also planning to replace the outer chain link netting on courts 5 and 6 which has fallen into disrepair.

The old wooden shed at the back of our grounds has been removed (thanks Peter Knowles) and we are also discussing plans to change the frontage of our clubhouse with quotes being sought for this improvement. This is still in the planning stage, but we hope that these improvements will be in place by the start of the new season.

I would also like to record our thanks to our groundsman Chris Thorpe for making our setting so attractive and I know visiting teams are always hugely impressed with our playing facilities and clubhouse.

We have had a great year and my thanks to everyone who has contributed to our success.

8. **Review of Subscriptions:**

The Committee has recommended a increase in subscriptions for the 2020 season.

Full	£220	Reward for Early Payment	£180
Young Adult	£120		£100
Junior	£105		£ 85
Country	£ 41		
Associate	£ 25		
Under 8	£ 30		
Under 8 (child of member)	free		
Family Membership	£450	Reward for Early Payment	£390
Temporary	£30 per month		
Visitors	£7.00		
Junior Visitors	£3.50		

This was proposed b Mrs S Johnson and seconded by Mrs S Buckley. All present agreed.

9. **Appointment of New Trustee:**

The Club has three Trustees. At present they are Mr P Collinson, Mr P Brereton and Mr M Seddon. Mike Seddon has announced that he will stand down as a Club Trustee and the Committee wishes to thank Mr Seddon for taking on this role. The remaining two Trustees wish to nominate Mrs D Johnston as a replacement Trustee for Mr Seddon. Following a question from a member who raised the fact that if Mrs Johnston became a Trustee, all three Trustees would also be Executive Officers of the Club. The Chairman agreed that this was, indeed, correct; however Mr Collinson indicated that he plans to step down as Chairman by 2021 and equally Mr Brereton is ever hopeful that someone will replace him as Ground Chairman. It was suggested a delay in appointment would be suitable to allow members to make a decision. The Chairman explained that the Trustees do not necessarily intervene in Club issues unless the financial wellbeing of the Club needed to be overseen. New Trustees are traditionally appointed by the current trustees.

A vote was then taken and with the exception of two members, all present were in favour of Mrs D Johnston becoming a Club Trustee.

10. **Election of Officers and Committee Members for 2020**

The following are elected, having been duly proposed and seconded:

Chairman	Peter Collinson
Captain	Tim Colocott
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 (3 years)	Karl Hughes
Committee Member (3 years)	
Committee Member (2 years)	
Hon Auditor	Michael Ansdell

11. **Any Other Business**

- a) **Padel Tennis.** Padel Tennis is an upcoming gam in Europe and the LTA recently adopted the game as LTA Padel. It is possible that a Padel Court would encourage new members, old and young can play and it is straightforward to learn. A feasibility study would need to be undertaken. Costs of a court are thought to be around £25,000, possibly the LTA have grants available. There might be lottery funding available. Different racquets are required. The court is smaller than a tennis court. Most members were keen for this to be investigated further.
- b) **Court Condition:** in their present wet state the courts are seen as dangerous. The Chairman stated that there have been unprecedented amounts of rain in the last three months which have caused this state. Fosse have been invited to inspect our courts with a view to rejuvenation, however, this will not improve flooded courts which are due to an extremely high water table The flooding will vanish during a dry spell. The slipperiness is due to a combination of volume of precipitation and deposits of algae and moss due to a long, hot summer. The Ground Committee will continue to monitor the courts and take action if needed. The Groundsman (Mr Thorpe) detailed the work he has carried out on the courts to remove the algae.
- c) Wimbledon Ticket Opt In: once again Members are requested to opt in via the LTA website or using the phone number being circulated. A computer has been made available tonight for members to opt in immediately. All members over the age of 11 are eligible to opt in.
- d) The Club Christmas Party is being held on Saturday, 7 December at £10 per ticket.
- e) Tie Break Tens tournament will be run on 20 November, starting at 7.00pm.

12. **Turnout Trophy:**

The Chairman has donated two tankards to be awarded each year to the players who have played the most number of times for the Club. in the current season These are awarded for 2019 to Phill Gray and Debbie Johnston.

There being no further business, Mr Collinson thanked all present for attending. The meeting closed at 8.57pm.