Minutes of 52nd annual general meeting 21st January 2020

Held in Goring Village Hall Belleme Room at 8.00pm

Anthea West,Club Chair welcomed members to the 52nd AGM.

29 Club members were present.

Copies of the 51st AGM minutes, accounts for the year ended September 30th 2019, committee reports and details of a proposal to provide an on-site toilet for the club had been circulated to all members prior to the meeting.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Jane Westell, Lesley Hill, Mandy Claridge, Jax MacLachlan, Sarah Dragonetti, Fenella Derbyshire and Jon Howey.

1. Approval of minutes 51st AGM

No comments were received on the minutes which were duly accepted as a true record of the meeting.

1. Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising

1. Chair’s report – Anthea West

‘Unlike 2018 when we celebrated our club’s 50th anniversary, this last club year has not seen as many social highlights, but there have been some significant events nevertheless.

Most importantly, after a personal visit in May from the LTA auditor, the Committee was relieved to have confirmation that we had implemented the necessary procedures to comply with the new stringent LTA safeguarding rules, mainly due to the huge effort made by our Safeguarding Officer, Fenella Derbyshire together with our coach, Jon Howey - please familiarise yourself with these procedures which can be found on our website. At the time, the auditor suggested that we conduct an online survey to get general feedback from members - we will be carrying this out early in the new club year and look forward to hearing what you have to say.

At this point, I would like to thank all of the committee for the time and effort they have put in to keep the club running - without them, the club would not survive. My special thanks go particularly to Jane and John for their help and support, but of course also to Joe, Alan, the two Davids, Sue, Lisa, Fenella, Clare, Sandra and Jon. Some of the present Committee have announced they would like to step down - after 15 long years, our Treasurer Joe would like a deserved break, Sandra who joined the committee as member without portfolio is very busy now and not able to take on a role, and Fenella who is resigning due to her other commitments; Lisa has agreed to stay on as Social Secretary. Then in a year’s time, our Club Secretary Jane, and I will also step down so our positions need to be filled at the next AGM. But fortunately, Don Shrimpton, someone who is not a tennis player nor currently a club member, has agreed to take over from Joe on July 1st, and Katie Crowley who has just volunteered to take over as Welfare Officer and will be undergoing the necessary training as soon as possible.

Our annual Open Day in May was well attended, but this year without the juniors as new safeguarding rules meant we needed to have more qualified assistants in attendance which wasn’t possible. A number of new members signed up on the day and we held a Newcomers’ evening event so that they could meet other club members. You will have read Sue’s and David’s reports of club matches played in the summer and winter leagues, congratulations to all team players who took part in all sorts of weather conditions.

Our new committee member David Boyd and his wife Ali produced a very comprehensive club development plan which we hope to progress over this coming year, and we have requested a visit from the Oxford LTA to hear their views. We currently have 140 adult members and 124 juniors, a grand total of 264 members, but it is important that we get more players on court. To encourage more participation, David has offered to help organise a couple of tournaments throughout the year, so please look out for those. We thank Jon for running his very successful junior tennis camps again and this year he and Clare are also keen to organise a Road to Wimbledon event for the under 14s, something we have not held at Goring for many years.

As to our clubhouse, you will remember that it was damaged earlier this year, and as recommended by the police, have now installed CCTV cameras - we are fortunate that John is very capable and willing to do this sort of work himself. The cameras were successful in capturing the images of suspects known to the police and we keep monitoring these as we still find litter and evidence of drug use from time to time. We now have a fire extinguisher on the wall near the ball cupboard and a small stepladder for general use. Many thanks to those who keep it all looking clean and tidy, also to Joyce and Ian who keep us supplied with tea, coffee and biscuits. The clubhouse is in need of some maintenance work now and Alan will be requesting funding for this work tonight and at this point, I would like to thank Alan for the time and effort he spends looking after our assets.

One item which has been in the forefront of our considerations this year is the condition of the toilet facilities we share with the footballers in the Sheepcot pavilion. The football teams have also been looking at improving their facilities and invited us to join them to build a new combined sports pavilion. We discussed this with them but the committee decided that the two sports are not well suited, that we would rather build our own toilet facility next to the clubhouse. John prepared a detailed document of the alternative solutions, from ‘Do Nothing’, to putting a toilet in the clubhouse ball cupboard, to extending the clubhouse, or to positioning a toilet module alongside - we decided on the latter. You have received a report on this and will be able to ask questions and vote on this later. The proposal we’re putting on the table is for funding of £25,000, ca 25% of our existing available funds. To spend this money is not a decision that can be taken lightly, it will deplete money available in the near future for capital development, eg major court refurbishment. Joe will be putting forward a proposal to increase subscriptions this year and if you vote to develop the idea of a clubhouse toilet, we might need to further increase subscriptions over the next few years. But some of us are determined to do something to improve the current situation, it is not acceptable that we invite other clubs to play on our courts and are unable to offer them decent toilet facilities. ‘Do Nothing’ is not an option.

This only leaves me now to thank you for your continued support and to wish everyone a happy and enjoyable year playing tennis’.

1. Committee reports and questions
   1. Match report – Sue Taylor - No questions
   2. Safeguarding – Welfare Officers Report 2019-20 Fenella Derbyshire - No questions
   3. Junior Report Jan 2020 Jon Howey and Clare Hodges -No questions
   4. Social Secretary’s Report - Lisa Lovett- No questions
   5. Court Manager’s Report - Alan Bailey -No question
2. Treasurer’s report - Joe Ritchie

Questions from the floor

Re other expenditure – court resurfacing: Do you have any feel for how much that might cost and when that cost be might be included?

JR – Yes. Our current estimate is that we need to resurface the courts in approximately five years time, that’s the best estimate we have at the moment, maybe ten or fifteen years, we certainly don’t think it will be less than five years and estimate this could be £15,000- £25,000 per court ie £75,000-£125,000, so we’ve got 5 years to ensure we’ve got adequate funding to do that particular thing and that’s one of the reasons why we’re going to increase subscriptions. However I’m going to say that if we also look at other potential future ‘dents’ like the development of the clubhouse and of the club then at this stage I would say we’ve got no contingency for that type of activity, we would have to look to fund it by increase in subscriptions.

Is it the case that five courts will need to be done at the same time? Do some need to be done 2-3 years before others.

AB – I think the position is we’ve got one court which is worse than the others. We had that patch done last year, we can probably keep patching it up for another five years, other than that we need to strip the court and completely relay it. (JR – I think that would be the three courts). We’re not sure.

**Approval of accounts:**

Proposed: Joe Ritchie; Seconded: Ian Brannan; Approved unanimously by meeting

**Approval of budget provision for court manager proposals:**

Court cleaning £1500, clubhouse repairs £2000, clubhouse painting £1000

Proposed: Alan Bailey; Seconded: David Boyd; Approved unanimously by meeting

1. Election of club chair: Anthea West

Proposed: John Turner; Seconded: David Vincent; Approved unanimously by meeting

1. Election of club treasurer: Joe Ritchie to continue in post with Don Shrimpton until 30.6.2020

Proposed: Anthea West; Seconded: Janet Chilton;

Don Shrimpton to become club treasurer from 1.7.2020

Proposed: Joe Ritchie; Seconded: Doris Norman; Both proposals approved unanimously

1. a)Re-election of current committee members:

Secretary: Jane Cartledge, Vice Chair and webmaster: John Turner, Membership Secretary: David Vincent, Social Secretary: Lisa Davies, Match Secretary: Sue Taylor, Court Manager: Alan Bailey, Development Officer: David Boyd, Junior Chair: Clare Hodges, Head Coach: Jon Howey;

Proposed: Ian Brannan; Seconded: Hugh Howie; All in favour

b)Election of new welfare officer: Katie Crowley

Proposed: Anthea West; Seconded: Janet Chilton; All in favour

1. Election of club independent financial examiner: John Schilizzi

Proposed: Joe Ritchie; Seconded: Katie Crowley; All in favour

1. Proposal for on-site toilet

Goring Tennis Club proposes to provide a toilet in the vicinity of the clubhouse, subject to the necessary planning permission, agreement of the landlord (Goring Parish Council) with a budget of up to £25,000.

Jane C summarised the background to the proposal:

‘The current situation if you use the toilet in Sheepcot pavilion is that it’s unacceptably dirty. The cleaning is the responsibility of the Parish Council for which the Club pays approximately £600 per year (includes grass cutting). The club has held meetings with the Parish Council and the football clubs and it has not been possible to ensure that the toilet is kept in a satisfactory condition. Also the situation of the toilet is problematic in that children have to be escorted across the carpark and I personally have found that when we are playing a match in the dark, the walk across the carpark is intimidating.

The committee looked at various options for toilet provision at the committee meeting in October 2019 and voted to recommend a modular disability discrimination act compliant unit (ie that will take a wheelchair) on a separate concrete platform situated to the southern end of the clubhouse. The initial costing of this comes in at just under £21,000’.

Toilet costing

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Description** | **£** |
| Modular unit £6800 + VAT 20% | 8,160 |
| Lorry delivery with crane £575 + VAT 20% | 690 |
| Builders quote for suitable concrete platform, connection to water, power and sewerage | 11,580 |
| Planning permission (est.) | 462 |
| Total | 20,892 |

Questions from the floor

Would it be a chemical toilet?

JC - it would be a proper toilet connected to the main sewer. The construction of the concrete platform and connection to the mains services is a bigger part of the budget than the unit itself. In future if the club decided to redevelop the clubhouse, a connection to the sewer would be useful.

Is the estimate from a builder?

JC – the cost of construction of the concrete platform and connection to mains services is a quote from Tracy Averies. Her company has quite a lot of work in the village including work on the Gardener pavilion and the Village Hall. It includes VAT.

Suggestion from the floor that as it is such a large amount of money to spend there should be a referendum of all members.

JC – this could be a possible action, AGM still needs to vote on the proposal to provide a toilet with the knowledge of how much it would cost prior to a referendum

How will the toilet be secured?

JC – it would be secured by a lock and we would keep the key in the clubhouse (as we do now with the Sheepcot pavilion toilet key)

What is the unit clad with and is it heated?

AW - the unit is clad with cedar and there is an electric heater.

How will the toilet be kept clean?

General discussion amongst members about the state of the Sheepcot pavilion toilet.

AW – in the 20 years we having sharing the facility in the pavilion, the number of football teams using it has increased hugely. Originally the toilet was intended for the referees and tennis club only but is now used by everyone.

JC – cleaning is an issue, but if it is our toilet we are more likely to want to look after it. When we have matches the team captains often have to clean the Sheepcot toilet before it can be used.

General discussion about funding the project led the meeting to consider item 13.

1. Proposal to set subscription rate for 2020/21

A report on annual subscription rates of neighbourhood clubs was circulated.

JR ‘For comparison: Current rate for adult at Goring £86 (and has been for 15 years), Benson £115, Cholsey £105, Portcullis £120

As you know the committee is looking to the future resurfacing of the courts in five years + time and possibly consider there is going to be some expenditure to do with the future development of the clubhouse. The current cash balance we’ve got would cover the courts requirement and if we go ahead with the toilet we would need to replace that. The range of the actual subscriptions means that we are something between 20-50% less than neighbouring clubs, so the committee is requesting that we increase the fees by 15% ie £100 per annum for a single adult. This will help to increase the cash reserves by £1800-£2000 per year’.

Question – if we increase subs by 15% how long would it take to recover the £25,000 spent on the toilet? How much do we save annually with our current subscription rate?

JR – We have a net cash surplus per annum of £3000-£5000 pounds, so if you took the lower figure with the extra income from increased subs and no additional expenditure, it would take approximately 5 years to restore the balance to £100,000.

We would look at increasing subscriptions in subsequent years to remain competitive with other clubs and generate cash for the future development of the club.

Question from the floor – why has our tennis got cheaper when everything else has gone up? Should the starting point be looking at inflationary increases each year and then consider whether we need to do more than that.

JR – raising subscriptions would depend on the development plan and the other thing that we haven’t considered is that can we get funding from elsewhere.

Comment from the floor – you have estimated the cost of resurfacing could be up to £125,000 in five years which could leave at least an additional £25,000 to find. Would the courts all need to be done at the same time?

JR – Five years is an estimate, it could be ten years. There’s quite a lot of unknowns. At this point in time the proposal is to increase the subscriptions by about 15% so that we at least start to generate some of the monies.

Proposal to set subscription rate for 2020/2021: Joe Ritchie; Seconded: Sandra Goosey; All in favour.

Following the approval of the motion to set the subscription rate, the meeting returned to vote on the proposal to provide an onsite toilet for the club.

Proposed: Jane Cartledge; Seconded: Sue Taylor; Against: One; Abstained: One; Proposal approved

12. Proposal to amend membership category – to remove social member category and replace with existing non-playing member category.

The need for the change was widely questioned by the meeting and the proposal was withdrawn.

14. Any other business

Hugh Howie thanked club members for the patience they show when playing with him – it is much appreciated.

Address from Joe Ritchie

It has been exactly 15 years since the AGM [21 January 2005] when I was appointed as Treasurer of Goring Tennis Club and I continue to see the club as an important community asset.

During this 15 years the club has come through, what I would call, a steady phase as the courts and the clubhouse had all been decided on previously and put in place.

The number of members in 2004 was 314 [188 adults, 126 juniors] which peaked 1 year later in 2005 at 334. Today we are at 271 [144 adults, 127 juniors] - more young adults required I suspect.

The cash balance has increased from £15k [£15,553] to £102k [£101,931] in this timeframe with major expenditures being the refurbishing, repainting and maintenance of the courts, and the purchase of the practice wall.

While the cash funds available at this time may look rosy … the need to resurface the courts in about 5 years time [estimated between £75k-£100k] and for future development of the club & the clubhouse [expenditure unknown] means that future increases in subscriptions will be necessary along with checking for other sources of funding such as the National Lottery, LTA, and any other sources that may be available to the club.

The development plan for the club & the clubhouse is at an early stage and I would encourage anyone, and everyone, who wants to see the club continue [and to prosper] into the future to come forward and be part of the team putting the plan together [which will be presented to and agreed by members when ready] and for members to continue being involved in the execution of the plan. In particular I would appeal to anyone between 25 - 45 years old to get involved and make your views known, for yourself as adults and for your children, as you are the future of the club and need to take more responsibility in determining the future of the club.

During the next few months I will be handing over to Don [official handover date of 1 July] and will continue to support him while he needs my help - I expect he will be glad to get rid of me as soon as he can!!

I expect that several of the current Committee members will also be glad to see me stand down as, a little voice send to me that, I can sometimes be ‘difficult to deal with’ - I have tried to ensure that proposals made by the committee for members decisions are objective, fair to both adult and junior members, show the complete picture and are not personally or politically motivated.

I am not leaving the area - having retired recently I will be doing more overseas travelling with my wife - and will continue to play tennis in the Men’s team/s [perhaps in a mixed team if we can generate enough interest] and expect to be around sometimes on Tuesday and Thursday mornings when not otherwise needed for grandfather or other activities.

I wish the members [including the Committee] a healthy and prosperous future.

Meeting closed.