

# HIGH WYCOMBE LAWN TENNIS CLUB ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



**22 November 2023 at 7:30 pm**

## **MINUTES**

21 people attended the meeting.

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Karin Brown, Alan Gates, Dave Arnold, Mia Lake, Maria Lawton, Belishia Visser, Tanya Petty, Debbie Maskell, Ken Caudrelier, Carolyn Nye.

### **2. Review of Last Year's Minutes**

Since no comments or objections have been raised it was proposed that they be accepted. They were approved by a show of hands.

### **3. Acceptance of the Audited Accounts for the Year**

The club's accounts are audited externally every year. A breakdown of expenditure / income and balance sheets for the club accounts was presented and is summarised as follows:

- The club's accounts for this year remain strong. Before depreciation and capital investment in LED floodlights, the accounts showed an excess of income over expenditure for 2022/2023 of £17,201.
- Adult membership is currently at 147 people, representing only a small drop of eleven on the post-Covid boost from last year, so is an encouraging level of membership retention.
- Adult membership fees were increased for 2022/2023 by 10% on the previous year, reflecting increased costs, particularly on utility supplies. Full annual membership is currently £220. We also introduced a parent "hitting" membership and a coaching membership for those taking private coaching at the club, both priced at £20.
- The number of paid-up junior members shows a significant drop on the previous year, but this is attributable to a restructuring of the recording of junior memberships and we expect this to return to previous levels next year.
- In March this year the club made a major capital investment in installing LED floodlights on all six courts. Total cost of the project was £46,014, which was assisted by a grant of £1,500 and loan of £12,000 from Bucks Tennis. The loan is to be re-paid in ten instalments over five years, and the first of these was made last month.
- The club continues to be stable financially. In accumulating cash for major upgrade projects, we had £73,446 in the bank at September the 30<sup>th</sup> (our financial year end).
- This year we have invested £2,342 in repairs to courts and surrounds. This includes two visits for professional court surface maintenance and moss treatment, plus £960 for the purchase of new sand and £461 for new nets.

- The miscellaneous expenditure of £995 includes £215 for the purchase of a table tennis table, £211 for door swipe cards and £150 for a new tablet for bar use. The table tennis table has proved to be especially popular during rain breaks in junior coaching sessions.
- Bar profits were £669, compared to £1,767 last year. Increased wholesale stock prices were certainly a factor in this, plus reduced sales likely due to poor weather. We will be reviewing bar prices soon to make sure they align with current wholesale costs.
- The floodlit team practice fee was put up this year from £5 per person to £20 to more accurately reflect the cost of new tennis balls and floodlight usage.
- Since April the club have no longer been hosting UTR tournaments on Sunday evenings, which provided a small income through discounted junior memberships and visitor fees.
- In October 2022 we entered a new electricity supply contract with EDF. The unit price for this is about 2.4 times greater than our previous deal. This is reflected in electricity expenditure this year. The new LED floodlights should be 50% more efficient, but going forward electricity costs are going to be an increasingly significant expense for the club.
- The increased cost for gas supply is partly a reflection of gas prices increasing by a factor of about three compared to our previous deal and partly inaccurate estimated readings, which will be rectified in next year's accounts.

The 2022/2023 accounts were accepted and adopted by a show of hands.

We thank Alan for all of his hard work in producing these accounts.

#### **4. Election of Committee Members**

There were no contested Committee positions.

The following Committee members stood for re-election:

Andy Gibbs	Chairman and Equipment
Sue Chapman	Secretary
Alan Gates	Treasurer, Website and Communications
Gail Barstow	Membership Secretary
Jezz Baker	Head Coach
Alison Wright	Welfare Officer
Adam Smith	Junior Representative/Men's Captain
Clare Smith	Social Events Organiser
Maggi Newcombe	Midweek Representative

The Chairman proposed that these Committee members be elected en-bloc and a show of hands confirmed the election.

The Chairman thanked all his committee colleagues for their hard work and support.

The Chairman also reminded members that there are still un-filled Committee and non-Committee positions for Tournament Organiser, Social Media Assistant and Bar Manager.

Trustee Garth Selvey appealed to the attendees to spread the word and encourage people to step up and volunteer to support the Committee.

## 5. Questions

No questions were received.

## 6. Reports

### **Ladies Team Reports** *(read by Janet Reid)*

#### **3-pair 1<sup>st</sup> team – Premier Division – Captains Debbie Langley & Debbie Maskell**

A very competitive season with very strong teams. We won 2 of 8 matches across the season.

We had some injuries and last-minute team changes. Thank you to all of the 6 players that played up across the season - it's really appreciated. The last match was extremely interesting but very grateful for those who played to get a team out. Also thank you as always to the core team.

It is going to be a shame to no longer be able to play in a 3-pair league but we're looking forward to how we navigate the 2-pair challenges next season.

#### **3-pair 2nd team – Division 1 – Captain Belishia Visser**

The second team 3 pair squad had a very good season. 2 teams pulled out of the league so we ended up with only four matches. Most of our matches were played later in the season. We won three matches and lost one however still managed to end top of the league.

Thank you to everybody who played and who contributed to making this another fabulous season. It is such a joy to be part of a team where people not only enjoy playing tennis but also enjoy being there for each other. Can't wait to see what next season brings.

#### **2-pair 1<sup>st</sup> team – Division 5 – Captain Clare Smith**

With a great bunch of ladies, we had a really enjoyable season. We came second, level on points with Aston Park, although they won four more sets. We're looking forward to a promotion.

With the very limited number of ladies in our squad, some ladies from other squads kindly stepped in to help us out on a couple of occasions. We really did have a number of tough matches, but we dug deep!

Thanks to all the ladies for playing and to those who helped us out on a couple of occasion.

#### **2- pair 2nd team – Division 7 – Captain Janet Reid**

The Second Ladies two pair team had a successful season in the summer winning all their games and ending up top of Division 7 five points higher than the nearest team, Farnham Common.

It has to be said that because of persistent injuries in our small squad, the team was on four occasions boosted by one player each time from another team and only once did we need to use two. My grateful thanks to those stalwarts of our team whose enthusiasm never fails.

It was good also to be able to include one of our promising juniors, Daryna, who undoubtedly halved the average age of the team! We look forward to the challenges posed by promotion to division 6!

## **Men's Team Reports** (*Read by Men's Captain– Adam Smith*)

### **3-pair 1<sup>st</sup> Team – Premier Division - Captain Richard Worley**

Another strong season for the 1st team with a 2nd place finish, achieving 5 wins and only 1 defeat against the eventual champions GXBL. A total of 15 different men represented the team with all of them winning at least a set demonstrating the strength in depth we have at the club.

### **3-pair 2<sup>nd</sup> Team – Division 1 - Captain Richard Poole**

After a tough start to the season, where we were roundly beaten by our first team, the lads went on to comfortably defeat Princes Risborough, Aylesbury and Chesham 1879. Our toughest match proved to be against the top side in the division, GXBL, who went on to thrash everyone. In spite of having a large squad everyone played at least one match and everyone contributed to our successes. We even had a couple of very timely guest appearances from third teamers Andy Gibbs and Tony Groom.

We finished the season in a very respectable 4th spot.

### **2-pair 1<sup>st</sup> Team – Division 3 - Captain Adrian Gurney**

The 2 pair standard improved significantly due to the team moving up several divisions. The team finished mid-pack. With the majority of 1st and 2<sup>nd</sup> team squads playing at least once.

### **Men's 2 pair 2nd Team – Division 8 – Captain Adam Chivers**

A strong start to the season with 3 wins under our belt was followed by a narrow loss to Richings Park who were the eventual division winners. High Wycombe coming second with possible promotion in 2024.

### **Men's 2 pair 2<sup>nd</sup> Team – Division 10 - Captain - Pat Budden**

Having gone up the previous 2 seasons, we found this season a bit of a struggle, with several new stronger teams entering nearer the bottom. We played 8 won 1, drew 1 and lost 6 from , so we finished 2nd bottom not sure if we will be relegated!

### **Veterans' Report - Mia Lake** (*read by Sue Chapman*)

The Men's teams each played 6 or 7 matches during the season against stronger opponents. Our final league positions unfortunately aren't high with 1<sup>st</sup> team finishing 7<sup>th</sup> of 7 teams, 2<sup>nd</sup> team 6<sup>th</sup> out of 6 teams and the 3<sup>rd</sup> team 5<sup>th</sup> out of 8 teams. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> teams could potentially be relegated.

The Ladies 1<sup>st</sup> team finished 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> teams both finished second in their respective divisions and both could have been promoted, whereas the Ladies 3<sup>rd</sup> team didn't quite achieve the same level of performance which resulted in relegation.

The mixed teams' results could have been better, especially the 2<sup>nd</sup> team who played 7, won 2, drew 3 and lost 2. The 3 matches they drew could have gone either way. It was a very challenging task to find men players for the level that we were required to produce. The opposition's men were a lot stronger which led to our team finishing in the middle of the table.

The Supervets team played 8 matches, won 3, drew 1 and lost 4 and finished near the bottom of the division. The three top teams were very strong and consistent with a high number of games and points won.

## **High Wycombe & District Mixed League** *(read by Pat Budden)*

### **1<sup>st</sup> team – Division 1 - Captain Maria Lawton**

I am delighted to say that we had another very successful and enjoyable season with our main success lying in the willingness and enthusiasm of all team members to participate and make every match good fun and very sociable. In the end we came second to our old rivals, Penn and Tylers Green by 2 points but only 1 set overall!

My thanks go to all my team members

### **2<sup>nd</sup> team – Division 1 - Captain Mia Lake**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> team was promoted in 2023 to Division 1; played 8 matches, won 1 and lost 7. We actually drew 2 matches against Hazlemere and Penn & Tylers but, unfortunately, we lost on number of games. We had very challenging opponents, including High Wycombe 1<sup>st</sup> team and felt that it was a big jump for the 2<sup>nd</sup> team from the 2<sup>nd</sup> division. However, I personally feel we shouldn't be relegated in 2024 due to the fact that we had a few very close matches which could have been favourable to us.

We had a very reliable and strong team who gelled well together, which was a bonus. That most of the matches were played on Fridays seemed to be an issue when we had some 3 pair matches scheduled on that same weekend. However, we won't have this issue going forward as there will be no more 3 pair matches from 2024 onwards.

As the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> team were in the same division, the players were locked in and not exchangeable between the two teams our challenge was to select strong players for 2<sup>nd</sup> team squad to increase our chance of winning some matches. The overall squad selection process with Maria was smooth, fair and clear and it helped us to prepare for the matches without any delay.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Team – Division 3 - Captain Pat Budden**

We played 8 and we won the first 7 and then lost the last match to a strong Hazlemere team.

We won the league and are promoted into the division with the 2nd team. A special thanks to Clare Smith, Alison Wright and Phillippe who played most of the matches along with a help from a few others!

## **Farnham Common League** *(read by Pat Budden)*

### **1<sup>st</sup> team – Division 1 - Captain Richard Worley**

The Farnham Common winter league 1<sup>st</sup> team managed to achieve a tied second finish in the division last season, winning 4 matches, drawing with Gerrards Cross Dukes Wood and only losing to the eventual champions Gerrards Cross Bull Lane.

The team was represented primarily by non-veteran players, with all enjoying the opportunity to play in the medley format.

Special mention should go to the 3 junior girls who represented the team across the season - Hope, Annika, & Kashish - who, in addition to playing some fantastic tennis, displayed a level of maturity in their on-court behaviour that some of our opposition could learn from!

### **2<sup>nd</sup> team –Division 3 - Captain Pat Budden**

We only had 4 matches in this and looking at this season's fixtures it's the same again.

We played 4, won 2 and lost 2 so stay in Division 3. Majd has taken over running this team as we try to get more non-vets involved!

## **Coaching Report – Jezz Baker - Head Coach**

Jezz thanked everyone for welcoming him to the club.

### **April 2023**

1. We continued the junior term time coaching programme. The first term we had 60 juniors sign up for one squad a week which we were happy with. This current term we have 65. We have increased slightly which is very positive considering we are entering the winter months. We run the junior squads over 3 days, after school and Saturdays.
2. We are linked with 3 schools. Two of which that I go to and one school that comes to the tennis club. This is a great way to bring new juniors down to the club. A lot of these players may not of ever had the opportunity to play in a coaching session.
3. In the summer we implemented junior holiday camps which was very popular where we had a total of 144 sign-ups over the summer.
4. In October we ran our first LTA junior competition. Again, a very popular event which saw 21 juniors competing. It was a team event that they loved and they started from 5 years to 15.
5. We continued to build the adult coaching programme. The Adult programme is growing, just a bit slower than the juniors. We have had some feedback with the survey which will hopefully help us grow.
6. Over the summer we created the 620 tennis coaching brand. I created a coaching website to ensure all information and bookings can happen online.
7. Throughout the year we ran 2 open days that increased some membership and the players on the coaching programme.

### **What does 2024 look like?**

1. Keep growing both the junior and adult programmes with hopefully more coaching days available throughout the week. This is an ongoing task, it's only natural to have drop offs therefor we are forever promoting the junior programme and trying to get as many players on it as possible
2. Run at least 4 junior competitions for the year as well as having a junior club championships
3. Create junior teams
4. Create social media for 620 tennis increasing attraction to the club and the programme
5. New adult coaching sessions - Tactics / team practice sessions as requested from survey
6. Recruiting another coach to be able to offer more coaching throughout the week.
7. Create singles box league for members. Spring release

## **Chairman's Report - Andy Gibbs**

### **Who benefits from the Club's income?**

I think it is worth regularly pointing out that this is a member' club and has no paid staff or officials. It is always a contentious issue increasing fees or refusing requests for additional facilities etc. but it should be remembered that all the club's income and expenditure is transparently disclosed annually at this meeting. 100% of the income is used to run the club or invest in the facilities. Only the membership benefits as all committee members are volunteers and give their time freely. We are officially a "not for profit" organisation.

### **2023 Membership Fees**

Each year at the Club's AGM, it's the Chairman's task to announce the following year's membership subscriptions. The fees are set to reflect the running costs of the club.

If we are to realise our ambitions for the club and its facilities, there needs to be an inflation related fee increase each year. For example, our clay courts cost £48K in 2011; the current replacement cost is now £80K.

Last year we raised fees by the then expected inflation rate of 10%.

To balance the books and deliver our planned investment program we have decided to increase next year's fees by the expected inflation rate of 5%, so full membership will be £230, off-peak £160 and under 25/FTE £80. It is important to note that this percentage increase is below our expected increase in running costs. The committee will keep this figure under review for the next few months in the light of economic conditions and the club's development plans. We will, of course, notify everyone of any changes well before the new subscription is due.

### **Match Practise and Match Fees**

Last year we increased match practise fees to £20 to reflect the cost of lights and new balls more realistically. We have received feedback that this was unfair to players who only started attending once evenings were lighter or that it discouraged attendance.

To address this whilst maintaining our financial position, we have decided to reduce the match practise fee to £10 and increase match fees by £1 to £4 so the individual contribution by a member is linked more to the number of matches played. This should encourage new potential match players to attend match practise.

I would like to point out that, as a group, match players effectively get much more court time and quality play than those not in the teams. The additional costs seem very low for the benefits gained.

### **Social sessions**

These sessions have been very well attended over the summer with all available courts in use. We are aware that the combination of increased coaching activity and mid-week matches has put a strain on court time and we have rescheduled some HW&DML matches to Fridays which has reduced the court congestion experienced last year.

I would like to thank Barry Aldous, Maggi Newcombe and Guy Foster for organising our evening sessions and opening the bar.

### **Club Membership**

As mentioned in the finance report, we have maintained most of the increased membership following the 2021 covid bounce, with 147 adult members. Coach assessment has helped maintain a minimum competence level for new players attending social sessions.

We have made the decision to open basic off-peak membership to all, without assessment, so court booking etc. will be available from the start of their membership. An assessment by a coach will only be required for attendance at social sessions. We hope this will increase inclusivity and help bring new starters into the club.

The number of junior members is believed to be about the same as last year but some issues with the capture of membership data need resolving for next season.

### **Courts and Lights**

Our new LED floodlights have greatly improved both electricity consumption and general utility, with a bright even spread of illumination and instant on/off operation.

We have now had the Astro courts down for 6 years, and with some additional sand and maintenance earlier this year they continue to play well. Wear is less than expected and we expect to meet or exceed our expectations for the life of the surface.

The clay courts have also had regular maintenance over the year, particularly to reduce compaction, which has been successful during dry conditions.

Regrettably, recent high levels of rainfall have exposed some drainage problems with courts 1-3 (clay) flooding and unpleasant, muddy deposits remaining after draining. It is currently unknown whether this problem is related to just the condition of the carpet and/or the infill or whether there is an issue with the underlying base.

Clearly this is unacceptable, and the committee is committed to resolving this problem for the new season. This is not necessarily a straightforward replacement of one carpet with a new one and may require construction of additional drainage between courts 3 and 4.

This flooding may well be a reflection of climate change with heavy rainfall over short time periods becoming more common, this means any solution must consider this becoming a new norm rather than a freak occurrence.

Fortunately, our robust finances should allow us to resolve this issue without undue strain or requests for levies on the membership.

### **Social Events**

We had a live music party in February (Trevor Barstow's band) and a successful quiz night in March with pizzas provided from the local wood fired pizza at the cricket club. We also held an impromptu mid-week social event in July with the bar open and pizza delivery.

### **Tournaments**

The club summer tournament was a great success and many people enjoyed watching some good tennis on finals day. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances, the Malcolm Bucknell and Barbara Stuart tournaments were cancelled this year. We sincerely hope they can run again next year, but we do need a member to volunteer to step up and take on the Tournament Organiser role. It is not an overly onerous task and support is available from our previous tournament organisers. Please speak to me or another committee member if you would like to help.

### **Bar**

Members requests that the bar area becomes more welcoming have been heard with a table tennis table purchased and a TV installed. The bar itself will receive a facelift soon with new decor and a replacement of some of the old fridges by proper chillers.

### **Maintenance and repair work around the club**

We had two visits this year for maintaining and cleaning the courts and there is always ongoing gardening, grass cutting, leaf collection, etc.

Rod Kettle has kept things tidy around the club for a number of years now but has decided, wisely, that the gardening workload, particularly the height of the hedges now requires a professional approach and so he has relinquished this task. I would like to thank Rod for his work over recent years keeping the grounds under control.

We have, via a recommendation from Rod, engaged an experienced groundsman from a local bowls club to make regular visits to keep the grounds looking tidy.

### **Coaching**

We are lucky to have found an excellent replacement for Ross, who has moved to Great Missenden. Jez Baker joined us from Berkhamsted in the spring and has settled in well. He is

looking to introduce some innovations to the coaching activity next year. I'm sure you will be hearing more of this soon.

### **Safeguarding**

About a year ago we had our first LTA periodic review of safeguarding. This involved a member survey, a thorough review of processes and policies in place and a site visit by the LTA. It is fair to say that this process threw up some areas that needed work by the committee, particularly communication with the members about safeguarding awareness.

Alison Wright has been appointed our Welfare officer and has overseen our response to the LTA report which has us now signed off with no outstanding issues. We cannot be complacent about this issue which involves continued vigilance and raising standards year on year. Fortunately, we are in good hands with Alison leading the committee on this important matter.

### **Future Developments**

As the financial report highlighted, the club is in good shape financially and, assuming current high levels of membership are maintained, we can consider some significant upgrades to the playing facilities in the next few years

We have already installed LED floodlights at a cost of £45K.

We are keeping a close eye on our clay courts with a view to keeping them in operation until the end of the season. Our financial position should allow us to replace courts 1-3 in spring 2024. We have not made any final decision on the type of replacement surface, either Astro or artificial clay. If you have an opinion on this, please email the committee or maybe use the suggestion box.

### **Finally**

I would like to recognise the hard work of the committee over the last 12 months and also a little known, but important group, The Trustees Garth, Karin & Alison Cicin-Sain. They protect the club's property from a legal point of view and ensure that the committee act in the long-term interests of the club. Garth and Alison are here this evening and happy to answer any questions you may have regarding their role.

Among other unsung heroes who have helped keep the club ticking along are:

Vicki Head who tirelessly sorts out our recycling.

Rod Kettle for keeping the grass and hedges under control. We now have a new groundsman, but on his retirement, I would like to Rod to accept this small token of our appreciation.

Maggi as Bar Manager. However, we are looking for a new bar manager as Maggi is getting a new knee for Christmas. If you're interested in helping, please let us know.

Jane Crabb for purchasing all the sundry necessities the club needs.

Lucy Duncan for keeping the fixtures happening at the right time and place.

Finally, all the various captains who chivvy us out to play competitive tennis at some not always sunny or local fixtures.

## **7. Any Other Business**

### **Membership Survey Summary**

A brief summary of the survey results was read by the Chairman.

- The survey was sent to all "Full, Off-peak, U21/25, Parent Hitting and Coaching members. We received 42 responses – approx. 25% of the membership. We take this

as a sign that the majority of members are happy with HWLTC and the running of the club.

- 92% felt the club offered good value for money and the majority were anticipating renewing in 2024
- A choice of surface was important to 60% of those who replied. There were several comments about the current state of the clay courts, which we are doing our best to address
- Email, word of mouth and WhatsApp groups are the most popular forms of communication.
- 80% attend regularly attend one or more social sessions
- Everyone who responded said they would like more coaching opportunities – including cardio, singles and team tactics
- Comments regarding safeguarding, inclusivity and behaviour at the club were mixed. The majority of members are welcoming, supportive and respectful but it would appear there have been occasions when behaviour has not met the high standards of inclusivity we expect from our members.
- There were some further suggestions on how we could easily improve our facilities, such as umbrellas or a gazebo to provide shade in the summer. We have recently provided a table tennis table, which is proving popular, and a TV.
- The survey revealed a reluctance by members to contribute to the running of the club and take on a voluntary role. As a members' club we need our members to get involved and give something back by helping out the people who already do so much to ensure we can all continue to enjoy good facilities and competitive tennis.

This exercise will be repeated from time to time to ensure that we are the club is being managed in line with members' expectations. However, we know we can't please all members all of the time although we do try our best.

### **Ladies Captain**

The Chairman announced that Philippa Worley has agreed to return as Ladies Captain. Phillipa was proposed by email by Debbie Maskell and Nikki Formby and elected to the Committee by a show of hands.

### **Xmas Party**

Clare Smith has put together a really good club Xmas event on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December 7-30pm onwards. It should be great fun with hog roast/veggie options and a professional disco to keep things lively. Half of the tickets needed to make the Xmas Party viable have already been sold, but we need more members to buy their tickets before the end of November.

## **8. Presentations**

- The Ladies Salver was presented to Alison Wright.
- The Men's Salver was presented to Pat Budden.

That concludes the AGM business.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.52pm.