

# HIGH WYCOMBE LAWN TENNIS CLUB ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



**24 November 2021 at 7:30 pm**

## **MINUTES**

16 people joined the meeting plus 2 people joined via Zoom.

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

Adam Smith, Josh Blattner, Mia Lake, Jane Crabb, Richard Worley

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

Last year's minutes have been posted on the noticeboard for 30 days and as 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**

Alan Gates presented the breakdown of expenditure / income and balance sheets for the club accounts and this is summarised as follows:

- The club's accounts for this year have again been impacted by Covid-19 restrictions. We have had two periods of club closure, during November 2020 and January/February /March 2021 when no tennis activity took place. Since then, all summer leagues and the club tournament have taken place, and since August the club has been fully open again.
- Adult membership is currently at 161 people, representing an extremely healthy increase of 28 on the total at this time last year. Like most tennis clubs, as an outdoor venue we have benefitted greatly from the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions, and our current adult membership numbers are by far the largest since we started recording in 2006. Junior membership has increased from 54 to 61.
- Financially, we have a bit of a windfall from the increased membership numbers, and this year the club saw an excess of income over expenditure of £16,725, far higher than the £6,161 of the previous highly Covid impacted year.
- Income from senior subscriptions was impacted by members being given partial refunds/discounts due to Covid-19 lockdowns and no annual increment being applied to this year's membership fees, but this has been more than compensated for by the increased membership levels.
- The main challenge for the club this coming year will be to retain as many of the new members as possible at the renewal time in March.

- The club continues to be in a stable state financially. In accumulating cash for major upgrade projects, we had £70,526 in the bank at September the 30<sup>th</sup> (our financial year end)
- This year we have invested £2,893 in repairs to courts and surrounds. This includes four visits from Nigel Godwin for court surface maintenance (clay and astro), plus £672 for the purchase of new sand.
- The repairs/renewals expenditure includes £1,441 spent on redecoration of the clubhouse changing rooms and reception. Our thanks to Mike for carrying out that work.
- Due to a supplier billing error following a switch of energy provider last year, this year we have received a refund of £820 for electricity, explaining what appears on the accounts to be a significant reduction in electricity usage, which was not actually the case.
- Bar profits were £548, compared to £178 last year. The bar was closed from December 2020 to May 2021 due to Covid-19 restrictions. The previous year's low figure of £178 was due to the bar being closed for the whole summer of 2020.
- In August, the club purchased a vending machine for the clubhouse and at the same time applied a small increase in product prices to cover purchase and maintenance of the machine. Takings from the machine appear in the accounts as part of bar profits, which we hope will show an increase next year as a result.

The 2020/2021 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 and the following Committee members stood for re-election:

Andy Gibbs	Chairman and Equipment
Sue Chapman	Secretary
Alan Gates	Treasurer, Website and Communications
Clare Smith	Membership Secretary
Carolyn Nye	Tournament Secretary
Ross Murray	Head Coach
Maggie Newcombe	Midweek Representative
Adam Smith	Junior Representative
Josh Blattner	Men's Captain
Mike Nye	Committee Assistant

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.

Looking back over the last year I have realised just how central to the club's smooth running our secretary, Sue Chapman and treasurer Alan gates are. Very few days have passed without some issue or another requiring their involvement.

I'd also like to recognise the contribution made by Dave Burwood, who served as Membership & Marketing secretary during a very busy period for membership enquiries. Dave recently stepped down for family reasons and we are fortunate that Clare Smith has stepped up to cover membership going forward.

I'd like to thank Philippa for her work as Ladies captain over the last 5 years and wish her and Alan well in their new home.

I'd also like to thank Monika Grosch for keeping the clubhouse clean over the last few years and wish her well on her move to Devon.

A club like ours relies on the support of its members and in that we are lucky indeed.

Thanks also to Barry, Penny and Maggi for keeping the social sessions lively and helping to integrate new members; Lucy for managing fixtures in a particularly difficult period; our Vets captain Mia Lake and all the other captains who have had to deal with getting the teams, squads, and practise back up after the covid break.

Last but by no means least Rod Kettle for keeping the grounds tidy and the bar well stocked! Rod has retired from his bar work and this is now being covered by Penny who has made an excellent start in keeping us in beer and wine!

## **5. Reports**

### **Philippa Worley – Ladies Captain**

We have had some great matches this year and I am sorry that we are in danger of losing the 3 pair afternoon games. Many clubs are finding it hard to find players who can manage 6 sets in an afternoon which is a great shame.

It will be interesting to see what happens in summer 2022.

Our first team only won one match last year in Premier division and the second team came TOP equal so we may well be in the same division. Very exciting.

The 2 pair teams were brilliant, had some great tennis and kept their middling position so can enjoy some good matches next year.

### **Josh Blattner – Men's Captain**

Firstly, I would like to thank the captains for volunteering their time to run the Men's teams this season. With the pandemic this year there were a few teams dropping out and rearranged matches which proved challenging at times.

### **Men's 1st 3 pair - Richard Worley**

A disappointing start to what promised to be a tough season in the Premier Division as Great Missenden pulled their team out of the league a couple of days before we were due to play them.

Fortunately, we managed to secure a draw at home against a strong David Lloyd Milton Keynes team and win against them away from home before they too withdrew from the league. This left two matches against the reigning champions Milton Keynes 1 who ultimately showed their class at this level securing two hard fought victories, leaving us with a 2nd place finish in the league.

Thanks to all who played and to those who attended match practice where there was a very high standard of play this year.

### **Men's 2nd Team 3 pair - Richard Poole**

After a tough start to the season where we narrowly lost to MK2 and were roundly beaten by Princes Risborough 1, the team travelled to Aylesbury and delivered a crushing defeat. All the guys played well but the outstanding performance was provided by Matt Warnes and Ben Issacs, winning five of the six sets.

Our next match with Great Missenden 2 nearly didn't happen because of a covid-19 infection with one of the away team members. This match was probably pivotal where all the team played well under fairly extreme conditions. (mid 30's) and the outcome was a narrow victory. The outstanding performance here was a gruelling halved first rubber achieved by Ian and Adrian against their first pair. So gruelling that the Missenden 1st pair missed their next rubber!

The fifth match of the season was at Wooburn Park and a narrow victory here secured our place in Division 1. All six players contributed to that victory but the outstanding performances here were by Matt Warnes and James Copland who picked up all six sets.

The last match of the session was against the strongest team in the division by some way where we sadly received a bit of a thrashing. The outstanding performance here were by the third pair, Alan Gates and Dave Atherton, who secured two of the three sets won by Wycombe.

By the end of the season, we had fielded 14 different players, three of whom were either new to the club or at least new to the team. These were Matt Warnes, Ben Issacs and Matt Araujo. Each of them contributed significantly to our wins. But it should also be said that everyone who played this season definitely contributed to our success in staying in Division 1.

Player of the season - Matt Warnes

### **Men's 3rd 3 Pair – Adam Chivers**

Firstly, my thanks to all the players who made themselves available through a frustrating summer of both tennis and the weather. We had a varied mix of experienced, veteran team players and those new to match play. We managed to play four of our five matches, but unfortunately the last match against Princes Risborough had to be conceded due to a combination of Covid, player availability and rescheduling incapability. This resulted in losing all matches and propping up the whole league! Having said that, we were generally level pegging after the first two rubbers, but we just ran out of steam in the last one. Hopefully we can wrap the matches up sooner next year! Finally thank you to Josh and the other captains for their help and guidance.

### **Men's 1st 2 Pair – Adrian Gurney**

High Wycombe won 5 matches out of 7. Wycombe also won the most sets and games out of all the teams. Despite this we came 3rd overall narrowly missing out on 1st place by 2 points.

Players feedback was that the standard of teams was either poor or at a competitive level.

Standout player was Ben Hatton. Ben played 4 matches and didn't drop a set!

### **Men's 2nd 2 Pair – Pat Budden**

We played 6, won 5 and drew 1 with Marlow and won the league to secure promotion! Various players were used for the matches but, unfortunately, we were still not able field any juniors as they were generally unavailable. I did manage to play Nick Budden for 2 matches

but mostly used old guard. Players that played were - Vinny, Bolan, Chandri, Phillippe, Trevor Barstow, Mike, Denzil, Andy Gibbs and myself.

## **High Wycombe & District Mixed League**

### **2<sup>nd</sup> team – Mia Lake**

This season, overall was very successful. We played 8 matches and only lost 1 match against Colehill based on number of games. However, if they had a proper facility to host a night game ie having flood lights rather than training lights, it could have been a different story.

The team was strengthened by members such as Matthew Warnes, Ciaran, Nicky Moore and Rob Saxton (who sadly has left the club to go back to Uni).

The pairing is always a tricky one but especially was tricky this season as the half of team were new and never paired up to play any matches nor social plays in the past, however a bit of experimenting on pairings based on the individual's strength paid off and worked the magic in the end.

We will no doubt be promoted which is amazing news for the team. I am sure the team is very keen and eager to up their game and rise to the challenge ahead.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> team – Simon Fossil**

This was a new team for this season and was, to a certain extent finding its feet, as was the captain, who had barely played any club matches let alone led a team.

I am hopeful that the team will find better form next season with, for example, more consistent pairings and some organised social practice.

My particular thanks to Clare Smith, who played in almost every match.

Results: Played 6, won 2 and finished bottom.

## **Ross Murray - Head Coach**

### **Junior Programme**

The junior programme has had a change in culture from when I took control of the programme in July. All players now pay termly rather than pay and play. Players now have a pathway moving through the ball colours. Players are split more evenly into groups appropriate for their age and ability. Our current numbers stand at - 51 players enrolled, 21 at Red level, 16 at Orange level and 14 at yellow level. We have now introduced a performance strand of the programme at orange and yellow level and are in the process of creating an aspirantes (partially Bucks LTA funded) squad.

### **Internal tournaments**

We have held two tournaments for the red and orange juniors seeing attendances of 17 and 22. Giving the players an introduction into competing.

Winners of the Red category:

7th August Summer term- Peter Clarke

30th October Autumn term- Joshua Howell

Winners of the Orange category:

7th August Summer term- Macario Membry

30th October Autumn term- Evie Smith

### **UTR events**

Ran from 8th of May through to October 17th on Saturdays from 5-9pm. Players up to an 11.5 UTR competed. Some of our own members were able to compete, Annika Shenoy, Hope Wright and Nathan Burgundy. Valentyn and I plan to start the event back up in April.

### **Adult Programme**

Sundays continue to be the main part of the adult programme with David taking the sessions. Sessions take place from 9am-1pm, average attendance is between 4-6 players per session. Thursdays 6.30-7.30 is the other adult programme night, this caters towards beginners and intermediates, on an average session there are 6 players. s

### **Cardio tennis**

Taking place Thursdays at 7.30, is well attended with an average attendance of 7 since its inception and over 20 different players attending at some point.

### **Team training**

Ladies training went well. Thank you Phillipa for organising. Five training sessions took place and were well received (I think). It is something we will look to do again next year.

Men's team training did not occur.

### **Sport in Mind**

The charity Sport in Mind comes for coaching 1-2pm on Wednesdays, this has been a regular fixture since July 21st.

### **Schools Programme**

Marsh school - I now run an after-school club at Marsh infant school taking place Wednesday 3.00-3.45. From this session four players have been recruited and hence the creation of a new Friday 4-5 squad.

### **Chalfont Independent grammar**

Chalfont Independent Grammar attended Monday- Thursday for a six week block 1.30-2.45pm I saw year 7,8,9 and 10.

### **John Hampden**

Accessed our courts for a school match. I have a gentleman's agreement they will look to use High Wycombe LTC tennis coaches when possible in the future

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

### **2022 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.

For the forthcoming year, we have decided that after several years of frozen fee levels the positive outlook for the economy and the much less positive outlook for inflation means we must return to annual fee rises.

The levels for 2022 will be adult full £200, off-peak £138 and under 21/25 FTE £70. This is just £5, 2.5% - half the expected rate of inflation. If we are to realise our ambitions, more about this later, for the club facilities there will be an annual fee increase each year.

Younger junior fees remain unchanged.

1. Full membership £200
2. Off-Peak membership £138
3. Junior membership up to 8yrs old, will be free of charge.
4. Juniors from 9 -11 £20.
5. Juniors from 12-16 £40.
6. Juniors 16 up to 21 (or under 25's in Full Time Education) £70
7. Parent hitting with child £20.

I can also confirm that we will continue to give free floodlight use for social play. Tokens will still be required for all other arranged play.

### **Club Membership**

As Alan mentioned in his report, we have experienced a welcome increase in membership this year, with a record 161 adult members. Coach assessment has helped maintain a minimum competence level for new players. Reflected in this number is a very pleasing retention of the previous year's members.

The decline in junior members has been reversed with an increase from 54 to 61. We expect this growth to accelerate now Ross has his feet properly under the table.

### **Courts**

We have now had the new Astro courts down for 4 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. The base carpet on the clay courts still shows little sign of wear, which is good as our original financial forecast when the courts were laid in 2012 was based upon retaining these courts for at least twelve years. The clay courts are being dragged & lines brushed more frequently which has helped to reduce the problem of compaction.

We are aware of a growing (pun unintended) moss problem, and I am pleased to announce that this will be treated soon. Feedback from members about the playing surfaces is generally very positive.

### **Social Events**

For obvious reasons these were very restricted although we did enjoy a successful Halloween tournament. We plan to recommence a more normal social events programme, starting with our Xmas party next month, a quiz night in the new year and beyond that, well watch this space!

### **Bar**

Although the club house remains closed, we managed to keep the bar going as an outdoors "table service". The introduction of contactless payments has been a real boon for this and other small payments such as tokens, match fees and ball sales.

### **Maintenance around the club**

#### **External Work**

We had four visits this year for maintaining & cleaning the courts. There is always ongoing gardening, grass cutting, leaf collection, etc. A reduction in the thickness of the hedge by

the practise wall is planned for this month to ease the work of trimming and to increase car parking space.

### **Internal Work**

Mike Nye has carried out a small project to refresh the changing rooms in response to member feedback. I think you will agree that this has been very successful and brightened things up considerably. We are aware of issues with the ageing flush mechanisms and once we can find a suitable tradesman, we will upgrade the offending syphons.

### **Coaching**

The highlight here was the appointment of Ross Murray at the beginning of the season. Ross is well qualified, and he and HWLTC are well matched in needs and ambition. I am delighted to report that he has settled in well and that I share his optimism for the future and in particular the ongoing growth in the strength of our junior section.

Ross also brought the UTR (Universal Tennis Rating) sessions to our club, entertaining our members after Saturday social with some super juniors competing on our courts. As well as being very enjoyable, this also generated some significant income for the club.

It has been encouraging to see how busy the coaches have been with lots of 1-1 stuff as well as the popular Thursday & Sunday group sessions which have produced a steady flow of new members. Ross is developing other areas such as daytime and cardio sessions to increase court utilisation and possible feed-ins for new members.

### **Future Developments**

As Alan has reported, 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 medium (5 years) term. In particular, later generations of artificial clay courts are much improved both from a play and maintenance point of view, with much reduced compaction being reported. However, this comes at a cost and a top-quality replacement surface is expected to be north of £60K+VAT. The other major upgrade we are considering is, as the bulbs come to the end of their life, replacing our floodlights with LED technology which should improve quality of the light as well as reducing energy costs.

Clearly, the timing of this type of capital expenditure is highly dependent on variables such as condition of existing costs and membership levels so no promises other than we hope to see some of these improvements within 5 years.

### **In conclusion**

We have just carried out two membership surveys, one covering feedback on the club and the other on volunteering. We plan to share the conclusions with you in the new year, but I can report that the club is in a good place both financially and in members' satisfaction levels and so we must be doing some things right some of the time and we can't really hope for much more.

## **6. Presentations**

- The Ladies Salver was presented to Julia Atkins by Philippa Worley
- The Men's Salver was presented to Rob Saxton by Andy Gibbs on behalf of Josh Blattner



Garth Selvey thanked the Committee and his fellow Trustees for their hard work this year.

That concludes the AGM business.

Thank you all for attending tonight.

I close the meeting at 8.15pm.