

HIGH WYCOMBE LAWN TENNIS CLUB ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



23 November 2022 at 7:30 pm

MINUTES

17 people attended the meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence

Rod Kettle, Pat Budden, Yussuf Ally, Gail Barstow

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 represent a return to normal following two years of tennis activity being impacted by Covid-19 restrictions.
- Adult membership is currently at 158 people, representing only a very small drop of three on the post-Covid boost from last year, so this is a very encouraging level of membership retention indeed. Junior membership has increased from 61 to 81.
- Largely due to the current high membership level, this year the club saw an excess of income over expenditure of £20,184, surpassing last year's £16,725 when members were given partial membership discounts to compensate for Covid closures.
- The club continues to be in a stable state financially. In accumulating cash for major upgrade projects, we had £90,224 in the bank at September the 30th (our financial year end).
- This year we have invested £2,537 in repairs to courts and surrounds. This includes two visits for professional court surface maintenance and moss treatment, plus £558 for the purchase of new sand and £82 for fence repairs.
- The repairs/renewals expenditure includes £1,813 for clubhouse refurbishment, including new bucket chairs. We have also invested in repairs to the soakaway and clubhouse fascia boards, plus a new security grille to assist air circulation for the bar.
- Bar profits were £1,767, compared to £548 last year, when the bar was closed for part of the year. This year's profits were greatly boosted by the good weather this summer, and also additional income from the new vending machine.
- In June, the club purchased a coffee machine for the clubhouse with coffee capsules being sold from the bar and vending machine at £1 each. Takings from the coffee machine appear in the accounts as part of bar profits.

- Our previous fixed price contract for electricity has recently expired and we have now moved onto a new contract with EDF. As for all businesses, prices have increased enormously, and we are now paying about 2.4 times as much for our electricity, almost all of which will be on floodlight usage. We expect to be spending much more on electricity next year than this year's £3,429.
- We have recently moved onto a new contract with EDF for our gas supply. This will cost us approximately three times what we were paying previously though, as we do not use much gas, we do not expect this to be much more than £1,000.

The 2021/2022 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.

Adam Chivers stood for election as Tournament Secretary and Alison Wright as Welfare Officer 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
Ross Murray	Head Coach
Maggie Newcombe	Midweek Representative/Bar Manager
Adam Smith	Junior Representative/Men's Captain

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.

5. Reports

Ladies Team Reports *(read by Clare Smith)*

In the 3 pair league there are only 2 divisions

Ladies 3-pair 1st team – Premier Division

Everyone who played in the team enjoyed the matches. They were tough and some very good tennis resulted (and a few injuries) but unfortunately the results didn't go our way and we only won one match. We look forward to next season when we can introduce the enthusiastic and skillful junior girls to regular match play and gain a few more sets utilising all our strengths.

Ladies 3-pair 2nd team – Division 1 – Captain Nila Sari

The team came third in Division 1, but could take pride from winning more sets than the team who came second. We had 4 wins (one was a very long battle that finished at 6:30pm) and lost 2 (one was agonisingly close, after hours in over 30C heat!).

This season felt long and intense with some hard-fought matches. We put our hearts into those matches and got rewarding results. Good team spirit all around. Thank you everyone for playing!

In the 2 pair league there are 9 divisions

Ladies 2 pair 1st team – Division 5 – Captain Clare Smith

With a great bunch of ladies, we had a really enjoyable season. We came a respectable third place with 7 points, narrowly missing second place and the chance of a promotion. Although we won more games, Haddenham won 1 more set than us moving them to second place.

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.

Ladies 2 pair 2nd team – Division 7 – Captain Janet Reid

This was a season of major ups and downs! We won one match 8 - 0 and equally lost one by the same score! Our final position in the leagues (6th out of 8) was probably not entirely a fair reflection since we lost to the team immediately above us because of an injury to one of our players right at the start after we had won one set and had to concede the remaining three!

We are not downhearted though! For the first time we added juniors to our squad, and Abbie Britton played several matches for us with good results. We hope to bring on more, young (and new not so young) players in this team, so by definition it will always be a 'work in progress.' Many thanks to players from other squads who stepped in to rescue us when players from our own quite small squad were unavailable.

Men's Captain– Adam Smith

In the 3 pair league there are only 2 divisions

Men's 1st Team – Premier Division - Captain - Richard Worley

Won the Division – Played 5: Won 5: Points 10

A successful season for the Men's 1st team as we finished champions of the 3 pair premier division with five wins from five matches played. This is the first time since 1996 that the HWLTC men have won the Bucks Shield. A great achievement and there is now a commemorative trophy in the display cabinet.

There were notable wins over Gerrards Cross Bull Lane and a revenge victory over Milton Keynes, who beat us twice last season. 18 different players represented the team this season, with all of them winning sets, demonstrating a real strength in depth at the club. Congratulations to those who played this season.

Men's 3 pair 2nd Team – Division 1 - Captain - Richard Poole

The team finished in second place behind Woodburn Park.

Played 6: Won 5: Points 10

Men's 3 pair 3rd Team – Division 1 – Captain Adam Chivers

Unfortunately, the team managed only one draw – against Chesham Bois – and finished at the bottom of the division.

Played 6: Won 0: Drew 1: Points 1

Men's 2 pair 1st Team – Division 8 - Captain - Adrian Gurney

There are 11 divisions in the 2 pair league

The team had a good season and won the division which should ensure promotion next summer.

Played 7: Won 7: Points 14

Men's 2 pair 2nd Team – Division 10 - Captain - Pat Budden

The second team also had an excellent season and came top of the division. They are also hoping for promotion.

Played 7: Won 6: Points 12

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

The remaining matches brought forward from 2020 were played out during 2021 and Bucks Shield's overall match results are shown below:

Divisions for the teams remain the same for 2022/23 except 4th team ladies who got promoted.

Mixed:

1st team : 5 matches played and finished 3rd

2nd team: 6 matches played and finished 6th

3rd team: 6 matches and finished 3rd

Ladies:

1st team: 6 matches played and finished 3rd

2nd team: 5 matches played and came 5th

3rd team: 5 matches played and came last

4th team: 6 matches played and finished 2nd. Got promoted to Division 7 for 2022/23

Gents:

1st team: 6 matches played and finished 6th

2nd team: 5 matches played and came last

3rd team: 6 matches played and finished 5th

Super-Vet:

1st team: 3 matches played and finished 3rd

High Wycombe & District Mixed League *(read by Sue Chapman)*

1st team – Captain Maria Lawton

The team had a good season, enjoying lovely weather and challenging tennis. In the end three teams that shared the same points – Hazlemere were the winners and we came third. Mid-ish table is good and gives us room for improvement!

We beat Widmer End home and away. Beat Penn on games on the away fixture and narrowly lost the home one. Lost to Hazlemere home and away. Beat Wooburn on the home fixture and lost the away one

It was lovely to captain a team where there was a real keenness from the younger men players to get involved and we all enjoyed the fun and speed that they brought to the court! We have a lot of keen ladies too that enjoy the mixed tennis and our largish squad meant that we only got one or two matches each

2nd team – Captain Mia Lake

The 2nd team played 8 matches and won all 8 matches, due to the fantastic result we produced, I think the team deserves the promotion therefore expecting us to get promoted in the next season.

3rd Team – Captain Pat Budden

Played 6 - won 4 - lost 2

Finished second by 1 set on countback of sets won! Not sure at this stage whether we go up a division.

Farnham Common League *(read by Richard Worley)*

1st team – Captain Richard Worley

The 1st team won 4 and drew 1 of the 6 matches played, finishing in 3rd place, 1 point behind both GX teams who finished tied on points at the top with Dukes Wood winning the league on sets won.

2nd team –Captain Pat Budden

Played 5 - won 1, drew 1, lost 3
Finished 4th and will stay in division 3.

Coaching Report - Ross Murray - Head Coach

Overview

The coaching team is in a good place with a mix of full and part-time coaches able to flexibly offer a comprehensive coaching programme. We have seen the younger juniors complete their +tennis leader courses and some have undertaken their LTA level 1 coaching qualifications! A huge thank you to Guy Britton, Ian Chapman, Josh Oxley and Dimitri for their help on the programme!

Junior programme

We currently have 78 squad sessions sign ups, note some players play twice weekly. The breakdown being:

Red - 28

Orange - 20

Green - 6

Yellow -16

Performance yellow - 8

11 of our players have been invited for Bucks County training!

Adult Programme

Numbers on a Thursday and Sunday have been good. They have dropped off a little since November and the programmes will shut down December-February. Thursday has seen 4 adults reach the level required to join the club, one has taken up the offer, the other three intend to in the spring.

Guy is the lead coach on the Thursday improver session 6.30-7.30

Josh Oxley is the lead coach on the Sunday 9-10.30 advanced

We are looking for someone to take-over the 10.30-12.00 and the 12.00-13.00

School links

- Crown house school- regular session 4-5 Thursdays- April to October
- Marsh Infant School - regular session at the school 3-3.45- on going
- John Hampden School- regular session at the school Tuesday+Wednesdays 3.45-4.45- on going session
- Chalfont Independent Grammar- 1.45-3.15- summer term only
- Hannah Ball School 3 sessions over summer

Outreach

Tennis for Free at Desborough Park saw eight weeks completed as an LTA funded initiative. We gained two club members from this

Sport in Mind continues to run Wednesdays 1-2pm.

I would like to finish by saying thank you to all who make running the coaching at High Wycombe LTC possible. Thank you to the members, committee and most of all the coaching team.

Chairman's Report - Andy Gibbs

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.

If we are to realise our ambitions, more about this later, for the club facilities there will be an annual fee increase each year.

Last year we raised fees by half the then expected inflation rate of 5%. As you will be all too aware the world has changed a lot since then and with it a massive increase in inflation to a predicted 10%. We could probably cope with an increase in our costs of 10% with another sub-inflation increase but our largest single outgoing electricity, mainly for floodlights, has more than trebled from under £2K to an expected £7K+. As free floodlights for social sessions and match play have become valued member benefits, we have decided to keep these sessions free of charge and keep the token cost at current levels.

To balance the books and deliver our planned investment programme we have decided to increase next year's fees by the expected inflation rate of 10%. So full will be £220, off-peak £152 and under 25/FTE £77. 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.

As to Match Practise fees, with the huge rise in floodlight running costs and balls (+50%) it is no longer sustainable to charge £5 for the season as this represents a massive subsidy to a minority of the membership. The committee will review this fee to be more in line with actual costs and will announce the level early next year.

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 are actively looking to mitigate this for next year.

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

Club Membership

As Alan mentioned in his report, we have maintained most of the increase in membership following the 2021 covid bounce, with 158 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 number of junior members has increased strongly for a second year from 61 to 81. I would like to thank Ross for this pleasing increase.

Courts

We have now had the Astroturf courts down for 5 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 for the courts in 2012 was based upon retaining these courts for at least 12 years.

The clay courts are being dragged and lines brushed more frequently which has helped to reduce the problem of compaction.

Feedback from members about the playing surfaces is generally positive.

Tournaments & Social Events

We ran several tournaments, Malcolm Bucknell Tournament in April, Barbara Stuart in June combined with a successful garden party to celebrate the club's 75th birthday and most recently a well-attended Halloween event.

We had a well-attended Xmas party in the clubhouse, thanks Sam. Additionally, the ever-popular quiz night ran in March. Hopefully we will be repeating this in early 2023. Thanks again Alan.

Bar

Contactless payment continues to be a popular innovation with most sales made this way now.

Maintenance and repair work around the club

We had two visits this year for maintaining and cleaning the courts.

There is always ongoing gardening, grass cutting, leaf collection, etc. A reduction in the thickness of the hedge by court 6 has enabled us to recover many of the previously lost balls hit over or through the side fence. We are in process of finding a contractor to repair the fence alongside the court.

We have purchased a dozen "tub" chairs to help make the clubhouse more welcoming. This project was quite fraught, and I would like to thank Mike Nye for his efforts to make this happen.

Coaching

We now have a stable coaching team with group and individual sessions proving popular.

Last year Ross 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 and has continued this year.

Safeguarding

We recently had a periodic review of safeguarding at the club. This involved a member survey, a thorough review of processes and policies in place and a visit by the LTA. It is fair to say that this process threw up some areas that need work by the Committee, particularly communication with the members about safeguarding awareness.

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 next few years.

Our current medium-term programme involves planned expenditure of over £100K, pretty scary for a small club.

We have just ordered new LED floodlights at a cost of £45K. We expect installation to be completed in Quarter 1 next year. Crucially this will halve our electricity bill, saving about £3.5K pa. Other benefits include “instant light” and no cooling down between sessions. Based on feedback and member visits to other clubs that have carried out similar upgrades, we are confident that members will be pleased with the amount and quality of the illumination.

We are keeping a close eye on our clay courts with a view to keeping them in operation until at least 2024. Our financial plans, if realised, make the installation of a later generation of artificial clay court possible. These are much improved both from a play and, particularly, 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 cost around £65K+VAT.

Finally

I would like to recognise the hard work of the committee and look forward to the input of the new committee members.

After many years of service Mike and Carolyn Nye have stepped down. I'm sure we have all enjoyed various tournaments and social events organised under Carolyn's supervision. She has set a high bar – thanks again.

Although Mike is stepping down from the committee he is continuing to serve as the club's Risk Officer helping to ensure we keep things safe and legal such as electricity around the club. Thanks Mike!

Unfortunately, due to personal circumstances, Ginny Eastwood has had to step down as Welfare Officer. We are lucky that Alison Wright has agreed to take over the role. Thanks are due to Ginny for what has been a challenging year for her role.

Other unsung heroes who help keep the club ticking along are Rod Kettle for keeping the grass and hedges under control, Maggi Newcombe as Bar Manager, Lucy Duncan for keeping the fixtures happening at the right time and place. Finally, thanks to the various captains who chivvy us out to play competitive tennis at some not always sunny or local fixtures.

6. Presentations

- The Ladies Salver was presented to Lucy Duncan.
- The Men's Salver was presented to Richard Poole.

That concludes the AGM business.

Thank you all for attending tonight. I close the meeting at 8.18pm.