



Minutes of Leatherhead Tennis Club AGM

Saturday 8th January 2022

Nigel Turner welcomed everyone.

He referenced having sent out an information pack in advance to members who registered an interest in the AGM and also receiving questions that will be covered in the relevant sections. These minutes should be read in conjunction with that information pack which can be found in the Governance section of our website.

1. Minutes and matters arising

Resolution 1 – To approve the minutes of the 2021 AGM.

Proposer: Diane Ashley. Seconder: Nigel Turner

2. Chairman's Report

Part One: Chairman's Report by Nigel Turner - Achievements in 2021

Safety: Happily, there have been no falls or accidents requiring an ambulance. However, as our hard courts approach the end of their lives, they remain wetter for longer so please ensure that your tennis shoes don't lose their grip!

Security: Over the summer, equipment was vandalised in the pre-school next door. Also our bar operators do not always feel safe when locking up the club late at night in the dark. We are therefore looking at adding additional lighting over our entrance / exit area and also installing a CCTV system to cover the area around and inside the clubhouse. This won't cover the courts (there are safeguarding issues with this) and it's not to monitor who's drinking what in the clubhouse! It's to act as a deterrent against potential intruders and as a source of information should anything happen. The recordings will of course be erased at regular intervals. We will need to apply for landlord's permission, publish a policy and obtain a license. This will take a bit of time.

Our Goals for 2021: At last year's AGM, we set out five main goals. In fact, we ended up with six key goals (finding a new head coach!) and it's been one of the hardest years we've had.

Goal Number 1: To manage the club safely through the rest of the pandemic

It's still continuing of course. We were in full lock down this time last year and the club was shut. We then had the 'rule of six' outside and re-introduced our pre-arranged club sessions. We've had various regimes for using the clubhouse. We supported our coaches and redesigned Finals Day to allow for social distancing. Since the pandemic started, we've been through 17 different sets of changes. Thank you for supporting us through all this and being considerate to others.

Goal Number 2: To maximise the retention of our new joiners

In 2020, across all membership categories, we had 99 new joiners – a record! Being in lockdown, we contacted all members with emails and asked them to complete a survey. We polished our renewal letters and developed new induction information sheets and a guide to booking courts. In the summer, when we were finally able to do it, we held our first ever new members' social event in the garden.

Our overall retention rate for new members was 73% in 2019. We raised this to 89% in 2021. The figures are in the membership section. Well done Trudy and others.

Goal Number 3: To relaunch and refresh our junior offer

Despite the record number of new members, our junior membership actually fell in 2020 so we needed to address this. We reviewed our junior offer and made improvements. We restarted 'junior Fridays' – although success was patchy. Our coaches have long been active at local junior schools but this year we

also made contact with the three local secondary schools. We also reviewed and improved our mini and mini-parent offer.

Our junior and junior parent memberships have now returned to their 2019 levels but our mini and mini parent memberships increased significantly. There's still more that can be done – and Ed will cover this shortly. Well done Bex, Jo, Andy and others.

Goal Number 4: To review the operation of our club sessions and grading system with a particular focus on Sunday mornings

This has been the most difficult objective, with some success but also some upset and unfinished business. We had identified in 2020 that the Sunday morning session was patchy, hadn't had enough attention paid to it and was no longer attractive to our stronger players - which was the original intent. This was a missing link in our membership offer to attract strong players. The session had not been coach facilitated because our coaches need Sunday off. However, Nigel Catlow offered to facilitate the session if it became pre-arranged and communications could be via WhatsApp.

The tricky decision was where to pitch the eligibility standard. If it were too high there wouldn't be a big enough pool of potential players and if it were too low, the level of play would be too wide and not attractive to the stronger players. The decision was taken to raise the level and focus on 'team player standard' which would cover all C2s and the top part of grade C1.

This higher cut meant that some individuals who played regularly on Sundays would no longer be eligible for the club session. They were pretty upset, felt we were being unfair, and some made strong representations multiple times. We held face-to-face discussions, had practice sessions with a borderline case, and involved our coaches in reviewing an eligibility appeal. To help those affected keep playing on Sunday mornings, we released unused courts and notified them in advance of this.

We offered to review the new session after four months of operation. Outside the holiday season, four or five courts were being used. A survey of the participants gave the session very good reviews. Although a couple of respondents wished to raise the playing standard still further, all the others wanted it to stay at its new level. We therefore decided to keep it 'as is' but to reduce the maximum number of courts from six to five to ensure that at least one court was always available for individual booking with any unused courts being released a few days before. However, the Sunday session was still an issue for some who are not eligible and emails suggesting changes had been received from Kevin White and Peter Grabaskey prior to the AGM.

Nigel summarized Kevin and Peter's main concerns and suggestions so that the attendees of the AGM could understand their point of view. He summarized the view of the committee: that sports club grading is typical, Sunday morning is intended to be for top players and refreshing it was overdue. Attendance is voluntary so a lower ability range can mean stronger players don't attend and team standard members are 30% of the club which is a significant number. He reiterated that the aim that every standard of player has at least 1 session that are eligible for their level.

Nigel summarized the feedback from the survey of Sunday players following the revisions. One of the main take outs was that no one wanted the playing level to be reduced and that the session is buzzing. He advised that Court 4 is always available for booking as are courts that are not being used (which are released the Wednesday prior), and that these are being booked for those who wish to play Sunday mornings. Kevin and Peter and others are playing regularly on Sundays at 9am.

Kevin said that he wanted to have a club session at the weekend. NT advised that there are other sessions he could join e.g. Saturday at the weekend as well as Thursday evenings.

Peter talked about the questionnaire that the club sent out in May saying that members would like to get more feedback on the results. Nigel advised that the results are being used in the other club grading session work, which is incomplete at the moment, and that is why there hasn't been any feedback as yet.

NT asked people to raise their hand if they thought that what the club had done was reasonable and the majority raised their hands. *The Committee therefore consider this matter closed.*

Goal Number 5: To complete the second year of the club leadership transition

Two years ago, we announced that Diane, Judi, Paul and Nigel T would all be standing down from their various roles. We had accumulated several hats and we needed to split these off and make the main roles clearer so we could find replacements.

Thanks to the following for taking over Judi's and Diane's 'additional roles':

- Louise Cummins, Mike Collins and Sheila Budd for being our clubhouse team
- Trevor Cook for looking after clubhouse maintenance and inspections
- Almut Dirks for becoming our communications coordinator
- Katie Cook for becoming tournament coordinator
- Scott Dowsett for becoming men's team coordinator
- Helen Shepherd for becoming ladies team coordinator
- Alison Foster for becoming welfare officer next December

Our thanks also go to:

- Julia Crowe for taking over as deputy welfare officer from Janet Catlow
- Martin Crayton for taking over ball management from Pam and Richard Lamb.

Nigel thanked Janet and the Lambs for your time and efforts in these roles.

Nigel talked about there being a very strong committee and board of directors going forward, with Mike, Bex and Nigel Catlow having made an excellent contribution over recent years. Jo has now handled a full year as club secretary and made a great contribution to her sub-groups. Trudy has completed her first year as membership secretary with great success and, being a nurse by profession, also makes a big contribution on matters of health and safety. Martin, who is an accountant by profession, will be a great replacement for Paul as Treasurer and Ed will prove a great replacement for Nigel as Chairman.

Nigel said that his confidence is evidenced by the way Ed, Bex and Martin went about the unexpected goal of *finding a new head coach to replace Andy*. It was a very well run and effective process. Luke Digweed of the LTA who was part of it, said it was the most professional club recruitment process he'd seen. It's not just choosing the right person. It's negotiating the contract, ensuring that we retain Simon and Zak and providing the support that will help Alex run his own show and become a key part of club leadership. Nigel said well done and thanks to the three of them.

Part Two: Chairman's Report by Ed Stansfield - Goals for 2022

A new Head Coach, a new Treasurer and a new Chairman will make 2022 a year of significant transition for the Club. So inevitably a fair proportion of the Committee's effort will be devoted to ensuring that we don't drop the ball on all the background work required to keep the club running smoothly, such as paying the bills, supplying balls as well as court and clubhouse maintenance. However, the Committee has set itself four additional objectives for 2022.

Objective 1: Ensure a smooth transition between Andy Te and the New Head Coach Alex Jackson

For members, the key change this year will be the arrival of Alex Jackson, our new Head Coach. Of course, Alex has some big shoes to fill, but we are confident that he has the energy, enthusiasm and expertise to do just that. A week-long handover with Andy will allow Alex to see our current coaching offer in action, helping to ensure a smooth transition from the outset. Over the rest of the year, while Alex gets established, the Committee will be on hand to offer support, as well as discussing Alex's ideas for moving our coaching offer forward. Please do whatever you can to make Alex feel welcome.

Objective 2: Bring our junior offer more closely into line with LTA Youth

As we have already noted, 2021 has seen a recovery in our junior membership, but we would like to continue to develop this section of the club to build on the work that Andy and his team have already done.

Provisional discussions with Alex have pointed to the opportunity to bring our current offer more visibly into line with the new LTA Youth programme that was launched last year. This should give parents confidence

in the quality of our coaching offer and help to provide a clearer development pathway for juniors, giving them a sense of how they can continue to develop.

We will also look at cementing, and perhaps extending further, our links with local schools and whether there is sufficient interest to allow us to establish "junior night" or something similar as a regular part of our weekly calendar.

Objective 3: Finalise the review of grading and club sessions and effect changes

Club sessions are important. They are vital as a way of integrating new members, allowing our coaches to get to know us and us to know our coaches. They also allow members who might not otherwise meet, to play together occasionally.

Last year's member survey confirmed that our club sessions are valued. But some concerns were raised about the transparency of the grading system and the fact that it has never been updated. There were also some concerns that the old distinction between the Tuesday and Thursday evening sessions had been lost.

Attendance levels at the sessions in recent months suggests that not all are working as well as they could. For some members, the club sessions work best when they provide sets that are as satisfying and as competitive as the games they might arrange for themselves. For others, the sessions are social as well as competitive, a way of playing with new people and raising their level as they play more tennis. We have five club sessions a week. We've addressed the Sunday session and may need to refresh some of the others. To that end, over the next few weeks, a sub-committee is looking to finalise a new grading system and consider any changes to the focus / eligibility for the other sessions. If we make good progress, our aim is to communicate the changes before the start of the new membership year in April and implement them then or shortly afterwards.

Objective 4: Update the club's facilities plan in preparation for upgrading our lights & court surfaces

Our final objective for this year is to update the Club's existing facilities plan. In the fairly near future, we will need to upgrade our court surfaces and perhaps our floodlighting as well.

But before we commit to any work, we need to get a proper understanding of our options, including the choice of surfaces, the likely costs and whether the club's existing financial reserves are sufficient to cover them. We also need to work out whether we can tackle the lights and court surfaces together, or whether we need to treat these as sequential tasks and, if so, which should come first. A final consideration is how the work can be done with minimum disruption to our playing time.

Members will, of course, be asked to approve our plans for any major work and the resulting expenditure. But at this stage it is impossible to put a timescale on how quickly we might be ready to put forward proposals. Rest assured, however, that we are keen to ensure that the Club provides us all with the excellent playing facilities that we have come to expect, and that facilities planning will be a high priority for the Committee this year.

3. Treasurer's Report by Paul Carton

Paul advised that the accounts to 31 March 2021 had been circulated prior to the meeting in the information pack. In summary, the accounts showed a net surplus of nearly £25k. Subscription income was similar to the previous year but some areas of expenditure were lower reflecting reduced activity as a result of Covid restrictions. Most of the surplus came from government Covid grants which totalled £20k. The committee take the view that this exceptional extra funding should be allocated towards financing the major future costs of replacing the court surfaces and floodlights. Cash reserves at 31 March 2021 were £97k which included £20k of advance subscriptions. For the current year to 31 March 2022 a surplus of approximately £14k is forecast which includes a further Covid grant of £8k.

Resolution 2 – PC proposed the LTC 2021 accounts are accepted. NT seconded

Resolution 3 – PC proposed that Irene is the accounts independent examiner. NT seconded

4. Tribute by Nigel Turner to Paul Carton

Paul took over as Treasurer back in 2007. The club has done an awful lot since then which has required a wise and careful hand on the financial tiller. At the time he started we had the old 1960's clubhouse. Building a new one is a big project. The club had reserves but we needed to find a lot of additional funding – grants from the council, loans from sporting organisations, plus loans and donations from members. And, before long, the builder wanted more money to complete everything.

It wasn't just the clubhouse. Over Paul's time we've resurfaced the hard courts, introduced clay, rejuvenated and repaired that six years later, reconfigured the club entrance, added extra floodlights, repainted the hard courts twice and transformed the garden. In total, we've needed to save, raise and spend around £300,000 on facilities. Paul has been a key part of planning and executing all that as a member of the various facilities teams.

However, Paul has not only been our Treasurer. He's run our occasional Winter Leagues and he's a long-serving member of the Tournament Committee. He's also helped us on key projects - often behind the scenes. For example, he was my project partner when we converted the club to a company limited by guarantee. When we have had sensitive issues to manage, his views and advice have been really important. He's a wise head, thinking things through and giving a very sound steer.

Nigel thanked Paul for managing the money, for paying the bills and for developing the accounts. He also thanked him for being a key contributor to the management of the club over these last 15 years and for being a massive help and great friend.

5. Membership Report by Trudy Mapstone

Trudy thanked everyone for the help and support they have given her in her new role of membership secretary. She also said a BIG THANK YOU to the members, for the support they have given the Club through the pandemic, and in recognition this the club were delighted to increase the early 'bird discount' last March and waive the fees for the use of floodlights and for teas and coffees.

Despite the unusual times, or perhaps because of them, the membership numbers reached a record high - going from 329 in 2020 to 384 in 2021, an increase of 55. We now have over 200 adults with full playing rights. Another record!

With regards to Subs for next year, we plan to return to a more 'business as usual' approach. As Paul mentioned, it is essential to protect the Covid Grants to ensure we have sufficient funds to help us enhance and improve our facilities in the future. Trudy therefore advised that having held membership costs during the pandemic that there would be a small rise in line with inflation in 2022. This meant that membership costs would increase by: Adults £10, Young adults £5 and Student, Juniors and Junior parents by £2.50. She advised that information on renewing your memberships for 2022, including the offer of an early bird discount, will follow next month. She answered one of the pre-AGM questions about family discounts saying that "Yes" the discount still applies.

Trudy also advised that we are intending to increase the number of ball changes from 3 to 4 each week from the beginning of February. The club will continue to waive floodlight fees until next September and tea and coffee charges will not be resumed until the new Membership Year.

Resolution 4 - Trudy proposed to increase LTC subs by up to £10 as described and detailed in the information pack. NT seconded.

6. Social Report by Rebecca Usher

2021 has been more social than 2020 but we are hoping and excited to get back to pre Covid times in 2022. The club put on what we could this year whilst complying with Covid Safety standards. This year we have enjoyed mixed tournaments and a BBQ as well as champagne tasting.

Events we hope to bring back include; quiz nights, summer walk and plenty more one day tournaments and BBQ's. The main focus in 2022 will be a party in May to thank Nigel properly and we are hoping Andy will return to the club for it. Date to be confirmed asap.

Rebecca thanked the social sub-committee Mike, Katie and Rob.

7. Election of Club Officers by Mike Watkins

Resolution 5 – To appoint the Chairman, Ed Stansfield, Treasurer Martin Crayton and Directors; Rebecca Usher, Trudy Mapstone and Martin Crayton.

Proposed by Mike Watkins and seconded by Nigel Turner.

Resolution 6 – To appoint the management committee who in addition to the above are; Nigel Catlow, Jo Hammond and Mike Watkins.

Alex Jackson said a few words, primarily how pleased he was to be here and how open he is to people introducing themselves to him as he wants to get to know everyone (quickly)

8. Presentation to Andy Te by Nigel Turner and Rebecca Ussher

Nigel said the following: "It was an early evening in late August and my phone rang. 'Hi Mr Chairman'. 'Hello Head coach.' We're very formal you know! 'Can I pop in to see you on my way home tonight?' So we sat down and Andy dropped the bombshell. However, with Finals Day around the corner we decided to keep it quiet, then we briefed the committee via Zoom, talked with Simon and Zak, and then announced it to everyone at the club.

The job of Head Coach is a lot different from senior coach. You're running a business and a team, you're a marketer and an accountant, you're responsible for our junior tennis, you're the 'face of the club' for many people and you're a key part of the club's leadership. Over Andy's 14 years as head coach he's really helped us grow here. We started collecting statistics in 2013, and here's what he's done, measured in attendances at sessions. 2019 pre pandemic was the highpoint:

- Junior term-time group coaching is up from 4,000 in 2013 to a high of 5,700 in 2019
- Junior holiday camp attendances are up from 350 to a super 575 last year
- Your individual coaching attendances have grown from 500 a year to over 900 in 2021
- Cardio Tennis has tripled from 300 attendances in 2015 to 950 last year
- Andy facilitated 900 attendances at club sessions in 2013. In 2019, you and the guys notched up over 3,000 attendances.

In total, in 2013, there were over 6,000 attendances at coach-led events. By 2019 Andy had grown this to 11,500, almost double. The pandemic meant that activity dropped significantly in 2020, almost down to 2013 levels. But last year you roared back and exceeded 10,000 despite the lockdown. That's a tremendous achievement, especially for someone with another baby on the way!

That success reflects how Andy (and Simon and Zak) are at the heart of the club. It's not just the juniors, the team players or the learners who know Andy - pretty much everyone does. As so many of us invest in our play through coaching our success is very much down to Andy and his coaches.

Andy will see how much he's valued from the comments in his leaving card. We all know Andy's a great coach and Nigel highlighted a few of your attributes:

- Commitment and dedication to the club
- Ability to chat and communicate with everyone
- Being welcoming of new and potential members
- Encouragement and development of our juniors

Most important is of all is Andy's awesome sense of fun. We've seen him grow as an individual; from young coach to head coach, from home renter to home owner, from single guy to dedicated husband, and now into a father of two lovely children.

We all wish you, Laura, Amy and Jake the very best up north in Manchester. Thank you for everything.

Rebecca then made a presentation of a card signed by @ 180 people and cheque for @£1,400 that was the result of a collection – showing how much Andy was loved. She sad it was to say goodbye and that she will personally miss his energy and sense of humour.

Andy Te then made a lovely speech, saying thank you and highlighting the support from Irene (who was Chairperson when he was recruited) and Nigel.

9. Presentation to Paul and Diane by Rebecca Ussher

This was in recognition of the commitment of long-standing committee members who are leaving the committee. In 2021 the club was unable to say thank you in person to Diane for her 15 years' service

We don't usually present awards for service but this has been exceptional and the committee felt it deserved marking, so Rebecca presented Diane with an award in recognition of her service.

Rebecca reminded everyone of what Nigel talked about in relation to Paul's incredible service as LTC Treasurer for 15 years, as well as a friend and support to Nigel. Rebecca then presented Paul with this award in recognition of that service on behalf of the committee.

10. Tribute to Nigel Turner by Ed Stansfield and Paul Carton

Ed paid tribute to Nigel, handing over to Paul Carton who has worked with him for many years to say a few words, which were the following:

"This is the last AGM at which Nigel and myself will be attending as committee members and it seemed appropriate for me to represent the membership in thanking him for all he has done for the club over the past 13 or so years.

Nigel was first co-opted onto the committee in 2009 and was officially elected at the 2010 AGM. He originally expressed concerns to the rest of the committee that as he had no specific role, there wouldn't be anything much for him to do – little did he realise then how fateful those words would turn out to be! He was also concerned that he didn't have much understanding of practical or maintenance type issues and would be unable to help with any of those – he is now the master of how the electrics work, how the heating system works, how the alarm system works, how the floodlighting works and pretty much everything else besides.

He was persuaded to become chairman in 2012 and after becoming fully retired in 2016 he put his former work energies into the tennis club. It has been fascinating to witness at close quarters how those energies have been year by year directed into all of the aspects of running a successful tennis club. Most members who book their courts, turn up, collect their balls, play and go home, have little or conception of what has to go on behind the scenes in order for that to happen. I would suggest to you all - have a comprehensive look at all of what appears on the club website, particularly areas such as safeguarding, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, codes of practice to name just a few. All of these are necessary and reflect just a fraction of what a tennis club must have and maintain in order for it to operate. It is primarily thanks to Nigel that all of these requirements are in place.

In recent years we have converted the club to a company limited by guarantee, successfully obtained planning permission for and installed court 5 floodlights, rejuvenated the clay courts, repainted the hard courts, organised better access to the courts, re-lamped the old floodlights, formalised our arrangements with the coaches, developed important relationships with the local council and many more things besides. All of these led by Nigel.

Recently we have had COVID as a major issue to deal with – who do you think has been taking the lion's share of the responsibility for keeping us all as safe as possible at the tennis club – yes you guessed it – Nigel. The area representative from the LTA recently told us that he regards Leatherhead as a model example of how a tennis club should be run.

I could go on and on but I think you all know just what he has done to get the tennis club to where it is now and in great shape for the reins to be passed over to our new committee.

Rebecca Ussher then presented Nigel with an award to recognise his contribution

NT thanked everyone for his award and made a short speech in which he highlighted that it was a team effort and thanked the people he has worked with over the years. He said that the club is fortunate to have such dedicated volunteers. He mentioned the great personal support he has had when things have been tricky... Diane, Paul and Judi from the start and over the last couple of years Bex with the other long-serving committee members Pam, Mike and Mr Catlow more than pulling their weight. He mentioned Nigel Catlow, not always being easy but always adding tremendous value! He highlighted the great mix of people

on the committee; team players and social players, people with good heads and people with good hearts. As well as the great coaching team of Zak, Simon and now Alex. He finished by saying that LTC is a good club that punches above its weight.

Nigel thanked Ed. For giving him his freedom and declared the meeting closed, thanking everyone for coming.

Meeting Closed.