

LUDLOW CASTLE TENNIS CLUB

MINUTES OF THE AGM HELD AT THE CLUBHOUSE ON THURSDAY, 17TH OCTOBER, 2019

Those present as registered on the attendance list:

M. Lambert, I. McDonald, D. Kemp, C. Hood, Mike Quigley, J.Cullen, T. Jones, M. Jones, J. Taylor, J. Aitkin, D. Jones, B. Johnston, S. Matcham, P. Spencer, N. Holcombe, J. Nash, M. Edwards, L. Dickin, S. Salmon, J. Webster, G. Wright, C. Dowden, J. Freeland, D. Small, S. Byatt, A. Morris, B. Morgan,

Committee Members:-

J. Nicol, S. Salmon, J. Humble, J. Hulley, L. McMahon, L. Martin, L. Johnston,

1. Apologies

A. Martin, A. Holding, B. Purcell, J. Dowden, S. Brayford, D. Webster, C. Piper, A. Shuster, G. Hutchins

2. Minutes of the AGM held on the 11th October, 2018

N. Holcombe proposed that the minutes were accepted as a true record, M. Edwards seconded this and they were signed by the Chairman

3. Matters Arising

None

4. Chairman's report

I'm very pleased to report a successful year on and off the courts.

While outwardly not much may seem to have changed, over the past 12 months the committee has been shaping the club to face the future. So at the outset I'd like to say a huge thanks to all the committee members for their work and support, and a huge thanks as well to all those not on the committee who have given much time and effort to maintain and improve the club.

Big tasks have been effectively tackled by small work groups.

We now lead the way in Shropshire on the important issue of safeguarding policies. This is such a hot and difficult potato, and Linda McMahon, Laura Johnston, Marcus Bassett and Jim Hill have ensured we are well on top of this.

We have overhauled an outdated club constitution and will be asking you to adopt the new version tonight.

And we have migrated the 15-year-old club website to the LTA-British Tennis template to take advantage of all the expertise in that area that our parent tennis body offers.

This time last year our new LED floodlights were a source of concern for players and near neighbours. With the cooperation and patience of all concerned, we now have LED floods on courts 2 and 5 that all are happy with. Richard Smith and I were able to source some excellent alternatives, and Richard then stood aside to facilitate negotiations between the original contractors and ourselves.

Memberships and subs have continued to run at high, healthy levels. Huge thanks to our diligent membership co-ordinator Jane Hulley for this.

We have fielded teams in men's, ladies' and mixed external leagues, a big thanks to the captains concerned. Thanks to Ange Martin and Dave Webster for running our popular internal mixed leagues. And to Alastair Flint and others for our continually well-attended weekday social sessions. We have also enjoyed a couple of stand-out social tournaments, thanks to a woman who thrives on organising chaos, Christine Hood and of course, her willing helpers. The inaugural Richard Dixon Christmas event raised £500 for the mental health charity MIND. We look forward to another Dixon charity event this December, Chris and team willing!

Our junior coaching has gone from strength to strength thanks to our partners Inspire to Coach. We were also proud to host a regional-level, 3-day competition that drew top players from a wide area. The county has asked to return next year - a mark of our club's standing in the region.

Ken Swan, Steve Matcham, Chris Piper, Brian Johnston and others have done a fantastic voluntary job on courts and facilities, year round. None sits on the committee, so this is a short summary that will double as the Club Development Report on the agenda. Our courts are regularly treated with weed and algae killer, our hedges trimmed, our bins emptied, failed lights are made to work, car park potholes are filled, and much more. These are the people who do it uncomplainingly and often unseen. They deserve our most sincere thanks.

One major point on development, the drainage on courts 3 and 4, the artificial clay. Ken sourced a new contractor who has achieved a substantial improvement. We plan to stick with him and he should be here again in the near future. However, the drainage remains a concern and it could be difficult and expensive to rectify.

You may have noticed a couple of comfortable benches now facing court 5. They mark the coming together of Burway and Castle memberships, and club stalwarts Ange and Les Martin arranged their installation.

All has been relatively quiet during the year for the Bowls and Tennis Joint Committee, which manages the clubhouse and infrastructure of the overall complex. The good news is that the tennis representation has been strengthened with the additions of Alastair Flint and Karen Mayo to that committee.

In closing, I would like to nominate website guru Dave Webster for Honorary Membership of the club. Dave launched our website 15 years ago when doing so was a black art shrouded in computer code. He has been instrumental in running the site ever since. When Jane, Jenny and Alastair set about migrating our information to our new Clubspark platform, we discovered the vast amount of work which Dave had done over the years, which has benefited every member with an internet connection. I believe he should now be allowed to enjoy his tennis unhindered by thoughts of maintaining the website! Can I have your agreement on that please?

Thank you.

5. Treasurers Report

I am happy to report that 2018/19 has been another good year for the Club in terms of finances. Copies of the Annual Report have been circulated and I will briefly outline the highlights. Starting with Income –Subscriptions – the primary source of income- increased by a healthy 15% to £24,053 helped by the small increase in membership rates last year plus an additional 10 new adult members. Total Income at £ 24,468.45 shows a similar 14% rise year on year.

In terms of regular expenditure, Quota and Electricity costs and maintenance are the 2 key items. As you can see, Quota and Electricity stayed level year on year while Maintenance rose by 85%. However, two thirds of maintenance spending this past year has been on court cleaning which I'm sure you will agree is a worthwhile investment. Spending on sundries includes the purchase of 2 new benches placed alongside Court 5 using some of the money brought over from the Burway Club. Overall then, regular expenditure totalling £11,426.12 was up year on year largely in line with the increased maintenance costs.

In terms of borrowings, we have now fully repaid the £5,000 loan from Tennis Shropshire and we continue to service the remaining LTA loan comfortably. The LTA loan will run off in 2026. As you know this year we have invested in the Club's facilities by replacing the old floodlights on courts 1, 2 and 5 with LED lights and serviced those on Courts 3 and 4. The total cost of this investment was £15,284 largely contributing to the increase in Total Expenditure to £29,710 for the year and the final deficit of £5,242.

Going forward I have proposed to the Committee, and they have agreed, that we should create a new sinking fund to clearly demarcate monies set aside for future investment in the Clubs facilities. I anticipate that over the next 10 years we will need to spend in the region of £116,000 on court resurfacing and another £16,000 on replacing the floodlights on Courts 3 and 4. Based on an estimated annual contribution to the sinking fund I believe that we will have an overall shortfall in the region of £21,000. We have managed to secure interest free loans in the past to help fund this type of investment and I believe we will have to do so again in part. However we can't guarantee that this funding will be available and so a responsible approach is to plan to fund the majority of the Club's investment internally. With this in mind I propose a £5 increase in adult members subscription this year.

Adult Single £140 (£135)

Couples £260 (£250)

Families £270 (£260)

No change to juniors and minis

With no increase in membership numbers this will generate an incremental £1,075.

In addition, a small amount of interest income will be generated by the sinking fund account but rates are not expected to rise any time soon.

We will start off the new financial year by placing £27,000 in the new sinking fund.

The accounts have been audited by Nick Holcombe for which many thanks.

6. Membership Secretary's Report

The current membership stands at 292. That is 17 members fewer than this time last year.

However, when the categories are analysed the picture is:

Adult Singles – 11 more than 2018

Couples – 2 more couples than 2018 (4 more adults)

Families – one less family than 2018 (2 fewer adults)

The smaller categories are similar to 2018.

Taking the smaller categories into consideration as well as the above numbers, overall there has been an increase in adult members of 11.

The categories where numbers have gone down are juniors and mini juniors which are down by 30:

Juniors – 19 fewer than 2018

Mini juniors – 11 fewer than 2018

We also still have approximately three times as many boys as girls. Inspire2Coach are very active in their recruitment and in running programmes for the juniors so the lower numbers could be explained in the following ways:

- there are many competing out-of-school activities, tennis is one of many options for juniors
- Inspire2Coach have identified that some of their juniors who are showing real promise are attending several sessions, so although numbers are down attendance remains stable.

Finally, the new mailbox for Guests which we installed in December 2018 is working well as it makes it much easier for guests and visitors to pay to play. For some months it has also been functioning as a Suggestion Box. Since it was installed we have had approximately 50 guests paying £5 each (around £250 income from Guest fees) and we have had no suggestions in the box so we must be doing something right!

7. Ladies Captain Report

Ladies team tennis is in good shape. We have reviewed the team selection process and agreed that Chris Hood will work with Team Captains to select pairings and teams. Selection sessions will be organised prior to each seasons fixture meetings.

We are hoping to add a 3rd Ladies team in the Summer.

Chris Hood proposed a vote of thanks to Linda for her diligent services as Ladies' Captain, a motion that the whole meeting endorsed.

8. Men's Captain report

We have had another very successful year in men's tennis

The Shropshire Teams

Team 1 finished in 1st place now gaining promotion to Division 1

Team 2 unfortunately were relegated

Team 3 just missed out on promotion

I would like to thank all the team captains, namely Iain McDonald, Richard Smith and Mark Edwards for all their hard work

I would like to give special thanks to Seabury Salmon and John Sellek for all their help and support they have given to me in running the 2nd team.

Hereford & Worcester

We pulled the Men's 1st team out of the H&W league following a meeting when we all agreed that due to losing 2 of our best players it was impossible to field a team of 6. It was agreed that the remaining players would make up the 1st Team in the Shropshire League.

We will all get together again in February to agree the way forward with the possibility of putting in another summer team.

Men's Night

Is continuing to be very well attended. The feedback I have received is that everyone enjoys the way it is organised.

9. Coaches Report

Members of staff - Becky has left and Linda McMahon has joined the coaching team. She has just passed her level 1 and is on her level 2. Linda's role will be focusing on participation and will be working with Josh on building our mini (10 and under) programme.

Programme numbers - We have increased our programme to 96. Many of these players are playing twice or more a week. We have the highest amount of players playing twice a week of more in the company outside of our indoor centres. We have also completed our adult beginner group on a Monday night. We now have 8 players signed up to continue this group.

Schools - we completed our work with the MorethanEnglish. We hope to secure the contact to work with them next year. We are continuing our contract with Lucton School for coaching.

Competition -

We ran a grade 4 tournament in the first week of the summer holidays. This was a great success with 48 players entering the event. We had 8 players compete at the Ludlow tournament. 1 singles runner up and 1 singles winner!

We had 7 players compete at the county closed. 2 doubles winners and 2 singles runners up.

We now have 3 players regularly competing for Shropshire and Hereford county plus 2 others who train with the County.

We also won our leagues in the under 12 and 14 boys team tennis with a 100% record.

We also ran our junior club championships alongside the club championships. We had 3 events - boys under 18 and consolation and a girls under 18. We intend to run more next year such as doubles and mini club champs.

We have also entered 2 teams in the Shropshire mini leagues. 1 mini red (-8) and 1 mini green (10). Our mini greens made a winning start last weekend.

Camps - we have had 300 bookings on our holiday camps throughout the year. We are running our October half term camp between the 28th-1st this month.

Future events - We are going to run a Halloween event for the players on the 26th of October including a Christmas event on the 14th of December.

Future tournaments - we aim to run the grade 4 tournament again this summer. We also aim to include more matchplay on Saturday's (court availability in mind of course)!

10. Subscription and Visitors Fees

SS stated there was a need for a small rise in subs. JN reiterated that and referred back to her Treasurer's Report to explain the necessity to build for the future. The meeting passed the proposal with a large majority.

Steve Matcham asked whether further increases in subs would be required in future years and JN confirmed that this was a distinct possibility in order to build up the Sinking Fund sufficiently. However it was preferable to build the reserve up incrementally rather than be forced to confront the Membership with a sudden large rise in subscription rate.

Proposed by Mike Quigley

Seconded by Nick Holcombe

11. Club Development

SS said the new draft Constitution had drawn positive comments from all who had responded. Following a suggestion by David Small, he had incorporated an amendment to clause 6e, stipulating that any payment out needed the consent of two out of three authorised signatories before it could be made. He proposed the meeting should formally adopt the new constitution, seconded by David Small, with a unanimous show of hands in favour.

12. Election of Officers

The following changes to the Club Committee were proposed:-

Chair: Seabury Salmon standing down. Jenny Nicol standing

Vice Chair: Seabury Salmon standing

Treasurer: Jenny Nicol standing down. Diane Kemp standing

Ladies Captain: Linda McMahon standing down. Julie Humble standing.

All other Committee members were prepared to re-stand.

Proposed by Paula Spencer

Seconded by Mike Quigley

13. Any other business

JN thanked attendees for their support and made the following statement:-

I look forward to another year working with the Committee members to help keep the Club in good shape. As Seabury detailed earlier we have achieved a lot this past year and going forward there are a couple of initiatives I'd like to tackle. One is to create a medium term plan updating the last one which was done in 2012. I think this will help us to both better prioritise our activities and put us on a front foot.

The second is to try and introduce a few more social events particularly as we have quite a few new members. Of course these events don't just happen – they need organisers and volunteers so if anybody has any suggestions for events and /or would like to help please let us know. Either talk to us or there is a suggestion box or you can email via the website.

14. Croquet Sub-Section Report

Membership has been sustained, around mid -twenties with a core group playing frequently
Lawn maintenance and improvement remains a challenge but there has been significant progress

Club and other social competitions have been successful

Coaching has been provided weekly to non-members through U3A, and to Working Together and the LAR as part of community engagement

We are grateful to the Ludlow Town Council for a grant towards equipment and to the Tennis Club for its contribution to the compost bins

The subs are £50 per year and it has enabled to club to contract in regular mowing. Our overall finances are finely balanced and we will be holding another fund raising event next year.

There being no further business JN closed the meeting.

Next AGM scheduled for 15th Oct, 7pm at the Clubhouse.

A ballot for first pick of Wimbledon tickets was won by Jenny Nicol