

North Berwick Tennis Club Annual General Meeting
Wednesday 23th March 2022 – 7.30 pm

MINUTES

Present: Stuart Rye (Chair), Keith Barbour, Colin Anderson, Karen Price, Ann Hume, Gavin Henderson, Roddy Barbour, Antony Charles, Christene Charles, Keith Iverson, Grace Turnbull.

Due to the returned high prevalence of Covid-19, the NBTC 2022 AGM was held digitally over Zoom.

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence had been received from Leslie Campbell, Colin Campbell, Jo Drewitt, Willie Macmillan, Hugh McVey, Shelia Turner, Saartje Drijver, Gwen Scott, Debbie Lahaise and Colin Crighton.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the previous AGM

The approval of the minutes from the AGM on Wednesday 24th March 2021 were proposed by Stuart Rye, seconded and approved by the attendees.

3. Presidents Report

The President, Stuart Rye, reported on the previous and upcoming year.

It was another difficult year for everybody with the continued issues caused by Covid. After the covid closure in 2020, the club had a shorter 9-month season in 2021 to bring the club back into line with its more traditional April start to the year in 2022 and the club is now returning to a standard 12-month membership this year, running from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.

With covid cases on the rise again, the club advises everyone to continue to be vigilant, maintain social distance and continue hand hygiene.

The club is in a secure financial position (covered in detail later in the Treasurers report) – a great position, given the main highlight of 2021 was the extensive upgrades to Courts 4-6, with the introduction of the new LED floodlights and the upgrade of the surface to artificial grass.

The success of this project was down to the committee securing grants from ELC and Sports Scotland and the club is very grateful for the support shown from both bodies that enabled the works to go ahead.

The new surfaces on courts 4-6 appear to have been well received, with more apparent utilisation taking place compared to the previous surface, and the introduction of floodlights

has meant that the courts can now be used in the evenings by members and the public alike – it has been great to see all 6 courts now in regular use after dark.

A high lighting specification was agreed with the contractors and the resultant light performance has been excellent. The pivoting / hinged masts also mean that any subsequent maintenance should be straighter forward in the future compared to Courts 1-3.

The new toggle switches for the lights are now in place and the project is for the most part complete, with the last step being the painting of the masts in green to match the existing courts – this is due in the spring.

A 5 year maintenance agreement has been signed with Hallidays, to extend the Philips LED head lighting guarantee.

The remaining metal halide bulbs on courts 1-3 were also replaced this year, so these should be good for at least 5 years and the council have kindly offered to repair the storm damage to the SE light on court 1, which is currently facing the wrong way after storm Arwen.

The clubhouse has been redecorated internally and improvements continue to be made, with the hope of decorating the exterior over the summer.

The Clubspark Booking System introduced in 2020 continues to be well received and helps the courts be fully utilised.

The public pay & play continues to run well using the booking system which now allows all year public access and the use of floodlights is now included in the rental hire cost of courts 5 & 6 (at no extra cost).

ELC have been very supportive and our thanks goes out to Steve Wands and his team who have been facilitating on the clubs behalf. As part of the grant process ELC have also given NBTC a letter of intent to renew the club lease for another 25 years when it expires in 10 years' time – which is great for the security of the club going forward and hopefully reflects the council's confidence in the way the club is being run.

The ELO was pared back in 2021, but was a great success and is currently planned to go ahead again in July 2022.

Club Membership remains healthy with over 500 active members (324 adults and 194 junior) and it's great to see so many people enjoying the club and the sport.

The club is now supporting ELC "Access to Leisure" to help offer cheaper membership and public play access options for those in financial difficulty, and Try Tennis has been running throughout the year on the first Saturday Club afternoon of the month.

A thanks to all members who contributed this year to the Bursary fund, helping to raise £500 which has then been matched by the club to give £1000 in total. The first project is coming on line, with coaching in April for disengaged youngsters in conjunction with the NB Youth Project based out of the Hope Rooms.

A separate grant has also been granted by ELC to enable the club to buy new rackets to support this venture.

The club is also having discussions on running classes in conjunction with local charity Stepping Out and plans to keep the bursary option available for this year's memberships again, with the first £500 of any bursary funds raised being again matched by the club.

Monies raised from recycling balls are now being donated to charity, with the first of these amounts (£145) going to support Five in a Row, who completed an Atlantic rowing challenge on behalf of the Reverse Retts charity.

Carrying over from last year, the club still looking to upgrade locks on at least gates 4 and 6 and make repairs to the fencing.

Formal leagues and team matches return to their normal slots this year, with junior teams continuing year - '9 & under mixed' and 'Under 14 boys', as well as the usual 4 ladies and 3 men's teams and the club is delighted that the Ladies first team will be playing in the first division this year for the first time – a great achievement and the club wishes them the best of luck.

A variety of successful club competitions were held in 2021, including the annual adult and junior championships and the hope is to run similar again in 2022.

The seasonal café should be opening shortly in conjunction with the Big Blue, which is an exciting proposition.

The coaching team has been extended this year to include Sarah Coverdale and the Easter junior camp is going ahead shortly as usual.

The ball machine has also been repaired and another upcoming project is to upgrade the defibrillator and change its location to enable access to the public as well as members.

To finish with thanks to:

The members of the committee Keith, Colin, Ann, Karen and Gaivn for all their continued work throughout the year.

To Lesley McClelland for all her work as membership secretary

To the coaching staff, Roddy (our head coach), Karen (our junior convenor) and Sarah Coverdale, as well as all the other coaches, for all their work with the coaching this year

To Colin and Shelley for their work with the club teams and to Adele going forward.

A special thanks to Gavin for running the social groups and helping to organise games for members including the ladders

Lastly, to Antony and Keith and others for all their work on keeping the club maintained and the facilities functioning throughout the year and to Fletch for recycling the balls.

Many thanks to all and apologies to anyone missed...

4. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer for 2021, Keith Barbour, presented the accounts for the year digitally over zoom and electronic copies can be provided if required.

Steve Wilson (the previous Treasurer) has reviewed this year's accounts and confirmed they are correct (in alignment with the requirements of the constitution).

The closing balance in the club account at the end of 2021 was £63,000.

On the Revenue side:

Total revenue was high for 2021, due to grants obtained from ELC and Sports Scotland of £83,000 towards floodlight and court surface upgrades.

Due to the significant increase in members, subscription revenues were up slightly at £34,647, even though there was a 25% one off reduction in annual subs last year to reduce the burden on members during the pandemic and to bring the club back into line with the normal April season start, having given members three free months membership in 2020.

The projection for 2022 is very healthy, if we retain similar membership numbers at the normal membership fee level.

Revenue from visitors was up 63%, due primarily to the success of the booking system and the retention of the fees for courts 5&6 by the club. Also, the fact that the general public can now play all year, at night or whenever.

Coaching revenues have reduced, but many of the junior non-members [for whom there is a coaching fee] have now joined with their families – an indirect source of revenue for the club from Roddy and his team.

No revenue from the Café or ELO in 2021 because of Covid, but the café is due to re-open this year.

In terms of the revenue going forward, it is all pretty positive and encouraging.

On the Expenditure side:

Outgoings have increased moderately, including the final floodlight bulb replacement. For other costs, some are up, some are down, but our costs are generally under control. The exception is the floodlights, which the committee have made free to members, which has so far seen a significant increase in the electricity bills and we expect that to have a bigger bearing on next year [given the huge increase in electricity prices].

In terms of the upgrade projects, the committee sought finance from a number of sources before embarking on the floodlight and surface upgrades and thought long and hard over the scope, but eventually the funding came through and thanks go to Colin and Ann for their work with Sports Scotland and ELC and our thanks go out to those bodies for their support.

This gave us the confidence to go ahead with the project, which is now 95% complete and paid for in this year's budget. There is still approximately £4,000 held back for the painting of the masts and any other snagging.

Balance sheet:

The overall balance sheet is showing a slight decline (£7,000), but considering the works completed, is looking very healthy and stands at £63,000 at the end of the 2021 year.

This included £1000 ring fenced for the Bursary and inclusion strategies and the initial project to get young people from less fortunate families involved in tennis comes on line next month.

Outlook going forward:

Our finances are in good order with £63,000 in the account.

The committee will be formalising a sinking fund for future maintenance of the courts. The courts are the key asset and the committee will decide in advance of the next AGM the suitable amount to set aside each year going forward to meet any future commitments, but [with any major maintenance years away] we are well on the way to having enough funds for whatever we may need.

The committee is recommending that there is no increase in membership subscription fees for 2022, because of the health of the finances at the moment.

We are continuing with the free use of the floodlights, but ask members to be considerate of the costs and be sensible in their use, for example, remember to switch them off after use.

Members should also move to another court, rather than use Courts 2 and 3 for one game - just sensible behaviour, but these can all add up and count.

Free use will continue, but we will have to continually monitor that in light of the anticipated large rises in electricity costs.

The benefit of being able to just turn up and use the lights is encouraging more play throughout the town and we need to keep that if we can – that is certainly Keith's recommendation.

The committee has also embarked on clubhouse improvements, to upgrade it, as a long-term investment in the clubhouse facility.

An allowance for upgrading the fencing and gates / locks has also been set aside and Gavin has been working on completing that project.

That concludes the state of the finances - a huge amount of work has been completed this year and we are once again grateful to East Lothian Council and Sports Scotland for their support, which enabled the works on all three courts to go ahead. The feedback on the courts has been hugely positive and we have club facilities to be very proud of...

5. Membership subscriptions and visitors' fees for 2022 season

The committee's recommendation is that the base Membership fees remain unchanged for the 2022 season, returning to the pre-pandemic rates, pro-rotas, the same for the 6th year in a row.

For example: The Base Adult membership will return to £130 for a full season.

Winter membership date 2022 to return to October (October 2022 to March 2023)

Those were the core proposals and were passed by the AGM.

The voluntary contribution towards a membership or coaching bursary to help those on low incomes would continue in 2022, with the first £500 raised being matched by the club.

6. Election of Committee members

Colin Anderson stepped down from the committee after 3 years as Vice President

No other parties had noted an interest in joining the committee, prior to, nor during the AGM.

Other committee members remain unchanged, namely:

Keith Barbour - Treasurer

Anne Hume – Welfare Officer

Karen Price – Junior Convenor

Gavin Henderson – General Member

And additionally Lesley McClelland remains as Membership Secretary

Stuart Rye put himself forward for re-election as President and was supported by Keith Barbour and seconded by Ann Hume. No one else wished to stand and Stuart was duly re-elected.

It was noted that with 5 members, the committee still meets the quorum needed to make decisions as set out in the constitution.

7. AOCB

Antony Charles suggested the committee reach out to membership with any club events (such as one-day tournaments) or projects (such as bench refurbishment) to see if members would step up and support the committee.

Christine and Antony Charles thanked the committee for all their work.

Antony, queried whether the committee was definitely going ahead with gate enhancements, including the replacement of the electronic locks of gates 1-2 (with like for like) and the committee confirmed that the intention was to replace and upgrade the locks as soon as was possible (including the repair of fencing) and would do so in a manner that was deemed cost effective.

Keith Iveson had raised an email on behalf of East Linton Tennis Club, whose courts are being bulldozed to make way for new schooling, making the club homeless. Ann suggested that the committee review and see what NBTC could offer as a club in terms of support, as and when it arises (no timeframe is as yet known).

Having completed all discussions, Stuart Rye ended the meeting at 8:35pm