

## **North Berwick Tennis Club Committee Minutes for period August - December 2020**

### **Minutes of committee discussions held via Zoom, Email and WhatsApp up to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020**

*Attendees:* Stuart Rye, Colin Anderson, Steve Wilson, Anne Hume, Karen Price, Roddy Barbour, Gavin Henderson and Keith Barbour

The main challenge for the committee over the period has been ensuring that the operation of the club and the guidance to the members, has complied with the changing constraints relating to the Covid-19 pandemic. The committee thank the members for their patience and diligence in observing the guidance and any restrictions to play that have occurred.

1. The end of summer matches organised by east of Scotland tennis went ahead without issue - this allowed some competitive tennis in lieu of any competitive doubles leagues this year and the cancellation of other leagues, such as the autumn vets league. The general format was two matches on an evening, rather than the usual three. Three men's and four ladies teams took part.

2. The Adult club championships were organised by Colin and went ahead in the autumn. Over 80 matches were played (including plates) and were a great success thanks to all Colin's hard work. The draws and results were added to the club website, which helped the event proceed smoothly and keeps a record for posterity. There was no finals night, nor trophy presentations due to covid restrictions.

Actions:

Trophies will be engraved and distributed when conditions allow.

3. The Junior championships were organised by Roddy and Karen and were held in September. Over 30 children took part and the standard of tennis was incredible - all players had a fantastic day and it was a great success thanks to all Roddy's and Karen's hard work.

4. The booking system has been running for 6 months and has been well received by all.

This has allowed smooth access to all members and non-members alike; including over the cancelled ELO week, which proved to be busy, with the system enabling players still visiting NB to have access to play. This was integrated with Stripe digital payments and allowed guest payments to also be made digitally.

The Public access was offered on courts 5 / 6 on a first come, first served, basis and a separate padlock / code was added to the court 6 gate to enable access. Public access has been left in place and is continuing throughout the winter season.

The issues with unauthorised access to the courts during the spring lockdown were resolved after Colin spoke to the youths involved and no further issues have been noted.

The padlocks have proven fiddly at a time of wanting to minimise surface contact, but alternative upgraded locks or Smart Access are still under review. The former has been waiting on formal

quotes and there are still concerns with the latter given the on-going annual fees involved and having received no response to NBTC registering an interest in the LTA £10k support grant.

Actions:

Both to be revisited in 2021.

5. Floodlighting was made available to all members free of charge at the end of September thanks to Colin sourcing and updating the control switches. The lights are timer constrained (8am-10pm) to prevent lights being left on and have an override key for club use outside these times (eg. for the ELO or late running competitive matches).

The access is on a trial basis to review costs, wear and tear and any misuse by members. Access started in the autumn and is on-going with no major concerns to date.

Actions:

Continue trial and review.

6. Floodlight bulb repair was also completed in the autumn. After a failed first attempt, due to an oversized 'wheeled' lift, Halliday's returned with a caterpillar scissor lift to replace the failed bulb in the NW corner on court 2. Given the overhead costs involved (lift hire and turn-out fee), it was decided to replace the bulb in the NW corner Court 3 which had previously played up (and which actually failed on the day of the repair visit) and also the next oldest bulb in the SE corner of Court 1. No damage to courts or infrastructure was noted after the use of the heavy lift.

Actions:

Details of the caterpillar lift have been noted here for any further visit - namely a 'tracked spider cherry picker' hired from Nationwide Platforms (as itemised on the invoice). The 'tracked' aspect being of importance for access over the rough terrain from the clubhouse to the gate between courts 3-4. The lift fitted through the gate without need for removal of gates or fencing and ply boards were placed on the court surface (circa 6 foot by 3 foot) to protect the courts from the caterpillar tracks. A photo of the specific machine has been kept by the committee.

7. Court maintenance - Ecosse Revive maintenance was performed on Courts 1-3 in September and no concerns were raised by the contractors. Club court brushing has been minimal due to covid restrictions and this may have led to more standing water on courts 1-3 after prolonged rain and although the courts still appear drain in a reasonable time when rain ceases, two rollers were bought and are available on the courts for members to use to help assist remove any standing water.

No maintenance was required on courts 4-6.

Actions:

Review purchase of a heavy drag mat to brush courts 1-3 as used / recommended by Ecosse.

8. General maintenance: the rails outside court 1 and 2 were kindly painted by Keith. Some green bench damage has occurred over 2020 and Keith has spoken to a local joiner to get a repair quote. Clubhouse gutters were cleared and roof reviewed (with no obvious deterioration to the latter since the previous year). Fences and grounds were kindly maintained by Antony. Leaves and weeds were removed periodically. The clubhouse has remained closed due to covid restrictions. Cleaners are attending by-monthly in order to keep toilets clean and reduce covid risk, although it was noted that their last visit was very short.

It was also noted that the white benches (which are maintained by the council) are deteriorating badly.

Actions:

Follow up on bench repairs.

Consider repairing the white benches for the council before they deteriorate further.

Review cleaners.

9. A safeguarding support visit took place in October with Matthew Hulbert from Tennis Scotland. This included a club survey prior to the review, which had 56 responses, the majority of which were very positive and was followed up with a Zoom meeting between Matthew, Stuart, Ann and Roddy.

Matthew provided his conclusions on 3<sup>rd</sup> November, where he stated that he 'was impressed with the Clubs safeguarding provision'. The club just needed to provide an amended copy of their Diversity and Inclusion policy and for Ann to complete level 2 Welfare Officer training (optional).

The club members were emailed to highlight the latest Club and GDPR policies on 8<sup>th</sup> December

Actions:

Ann to update the review date in the footer of the DI policy

Ann to complete level 2 training when it's made available under current covid limitations

10. NBTC LTA registration was renewed on December 10<sup>th</sup>.

11. Ball recycling was organised by Colin. Although the monies per ball has been reduced, this is still worthwhile on environmental grounds alone.

12. Membership numbers have increased across 2020 and stand at 283 adult and 178 junior members – 461 in all, around 25% up on 2019.

13. Coaching – although initially a difficult year due to covid restrictions, the coaching team led by Roddy managed to have a productive year of one to one, group and holiday camp sessions. Coaching finished for the year in early December and will commence again in January if covid restrictions allow. Our thanks go out to all the coaching team for all their hard work over the year.

14. Courts 4-6

Court 4-6 improvement discussions continued over the period. Namely:

Whilst the booking system has been well received, it's been noted that up to 85-90% of advanced bookings are on the carpeted courts 1-3 and the lower polymer courts are not generally booked until courts 1-3 are full (with occasional exceptions).

This is putting pressure on access to courts 1-3, especially given the increased membership and the fact that only courts 1-3 are floodlit.

Previous points raised can be seen in the July minutes.

Latest Updates:

- (a) Discussions with Ecosse agreed that there is nothing that can be done to improve the current surface and playability of courts 4 - 6, those are just the characteristics of the structure spray.
- (b) It was agreed to get quotes for court resurfacing with artificial grass and the possibility of additional floodlighting, with any final decision being put to the membership for agreement.
- (c) It was agreed that if resurfacing proceeds, that courts 4 and 5 should be extended to artificial grass at the same time, as otherwise issues of converting one or the two at different times include: a colour match cannot be guaranteed by vendors over separate installations, joins would be obvious and would incur additional work / cost to leave what would be a substandard finish, with trip hazard dividers required between these adjacent courts.
- (d) Quotes have been received from Ecosse and Doe for artificial grass and floodlighting options. These include re-surfacing courts 4-5 and floodlights to one or both.
- (e) Planning for previous artificial grass resurfacing for courts 4-6 has expired.
- (f) In relation to any future floodlighting options, the new Floodlights recently installed at Dunbar were reviewed. These are LEDs on 8m static poles. It was felt that the current 10m poles used at NBTC give a better light throw and so these should be stipulated in any planning application (see conclusion). Although more expensive than the metal Halo bulbs currently used, LED was the preferred lighting option for longevity, but mainly for improved running costs. The LED specified for NBTC by Halliday's was reviewed to confirm it would be of sufficient lumen to provide suitable light throw at 10m. Floodlight masts quoted for are to be of a new, pivot design, so that they can be lowered for any future maintenance, rather than requiring specialised / expensive lift hire.
- (g) Colin found and applied for a grant from Sports Scotland / Lottery funding towards floodlighting on courts 4-5. If successful this will provide 50% of the monies towards this enhancement. The final decision on whether NBTC has been successful in its application is expected in the first quarter of 2021. A prerequisite for the funding is planning permission and also a minimum of 20 year lease. In respect to the latter, initial discussions have been started with ELC in regards to requesting an extension to the current lease, which currently only has 10 years remaining.

Based on the above discussions, new planning was submitted in December to cover resurfacing courts 4-6 with artificial grass and to implement 10m pivot pole LED floodlighting. To reiterate, the planning is required as a prerequisite for funding, which may determine whether or not works proceed and therefore is required before any final decision on the specific works to be implemented can be formalised.

The council planning fee was the same to include court 6. Therefore, all three courts were cited in the planning, to give NBTC the most flexibility in what can be implemented and to provide future proofing.

It was pointed out by ELC that other funding may be available towards works and this is being reviewed.

Actions:

Continue lease discussions.

Investigate and apply for further funding if possible.

15. The Committee role of Club Secretary as advertised on 12 February 2020 is still outstanding.

Actions:

Re-advertise the role in 2021 prior to AGM

16. The expectation is that the 2021 AGM will be digital as a group meeting in person is not covid compliant. Date to be confirmed.

Actions:

Committee to discuss format and timing.