



MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: 3rd March 2021 via Zoom, 7.45pm

28 members present in total, including 14 Committee members .

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Serena Sparks, Steph Wotton

2. MINUTES OF 2020 AGM

These have been available to view on the PTC website.

3. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

4. CHAIR'S REPORT – CLARE BAMFORTH

It's been a year like no other in Pewsey Tennis Club's history. It certainly wasn't the year the committee had planned for and it wasn't what I envisaged when I took on the role of Chair from Colin Gratton at last year's AGM. Instead of starting our new tennis season at the beginning of April with a sociable day of tournaments for adults and families and our draw for Wimbledon tickets, we had to wait until the middle of May before we were allowed back on court.

Our Events Diary for the year was bursting with tournaments and social dos as well as plans to host the Wiltshire LTA Junior Closed County Championship and a Help for Heroes Summer Games tennis event. But these plans were not compatible with lockdown restrictions and the diary of events, sadly, became irrelevant.

However, there have been many positives in the past year. Recognizing that there could be significant disruption over the year for our members, most subscription rates were cut to half price. We were able to offer this because our finances are strong and we felt they could withstand the impact of reduced income for a year.

The committee takes safeguarding extremely seriously and it worked hard all year to keep up with and communicate government and LTA guidelines and to open up the courts safely as soon as we were allowed to play.

One of the things that we introduced straight away was the policy of booking a court before playing. In addition to providing a record, this system meant that members were guaranteed a court to play on before setting out on their journey to the club and we will be keeping this facility in place even after things return to normal. Thank you to Keith Hampson for setting up the court booking system

and imaginatively adapting it to cater for things such as Join-In sessions and finding a playing partner.

With subscriptions drastically reduced, people working from home, families looking for activities for their stuck-at-home children and generally good weather, we had a huge surge in membership numbers. By the end of December we had nearly 500 members as against 350 the year before. Some of our new members had taken part in our Beginner to Player (B2P) courses run by Martin and Jon and well done to our coaches for inspiring so many to continue playing.

We had to cancel our weekly Club Sessions, which in normal times allow members to turn up if and when they want to for some tennis, and a chat or a cuppa in the clubhouse – these were far too sociable for the COVID era. Instead, we introduced Join-In sessions which allowed members to book in for 2 hours of tennis and enabled new members in particular to play even if they hadn't yet met other club members. Thank you to Paul Denton for not only organizing these sessions brilliantly and safely, but for also encouraging new members to come along, join a WhatsApp group and set up their own games. Many new tennis friends have been made at the Join-Ins.

Jon Gregory organized some Men's and Ladies' singles tournaments within a week of the courts opening in May and there were over 50 entries in total. A stylish Jon, accompanied by his glamorous assistant wife Christina, provided some Facebook fun with live draws and news updates. Thank you Jon and Christina and congratulations to Tia Hislop on winning the Ladies, with sister Steph runner up, and to Christian Blair on winning the Men's with James Birkett runner up. Later in the year, Jon also set up our Ladies', Men's and Mixed doubles tournaments, with help from our team captains, Nick Hewens and Paula Tailby. These were rudely interrupted by another lockdown but we are hoping to resume them once we are back on court.

Back in 2017 the committee asked all the members if anyone could help with the club's marketing communications. We didn't have any takers then, but I am delighted to say that last year Roz and Paul Denton offered their expertise. They are both marketing professionals and have enthusiastically taken on a number of projects for us, including improving our presence on Facebook and constructing a survey for our members. This year they will be organizing Pewsey Tennis Club kit which will be available to buy through our website, as well as helping to communicate club events (once they are back). Thank you Roz and Paul. We also welcomed Roz onto our committee in October.

It was a frustrating and difficult year for our coaches but, despite the disruption, they managed to run some adult and junior coaching sessions and more than that, they continued to provide a friendly welcome throughout! I'm pleased to announce that Martin renewed his contract with us for another 3 years. Thank you Martin and Jon for all you do for our club.

To minimize the use of the clubhouse and the spread of Covid, we only entered one team into the Swindon and District winter league this year, our Mixed A team. Thank you to Chris Roberts for captaining the team and well done to them all for winning every match so far (without even dropping a set). Lockdown interrupted the winter league and we await to hear what happens next with it.

As planned, our capital expenses were low this year but they did include a small contribution to the Bowls Club who have put in some CCTV cameras, one of which provides a good view of the path from the car park and much of courts 1, 2 and 3. We also bought some new nets and put down some paving slabs round the back of court 3.

I want to thank the committee for all their hard work this year and their support for me personally in my first year as Chair. Many have had a bigger workload than usual and I'm grateful to everyone for pulling together - an excellent team effort in what has been a most unusual year. Thanks also to Paul Coxon who continues to help with all sorts of maintenance issues, to Debbie Crapper, our Welfare Officer, to Jane Watkins for her energetic marketing of the B2P programme, to Chris Harris for once again auditing the accounts and to Colin Gratton for his support as Club President.

Thank you to all of you who volunteered to help via our survey. I can assure you that the committee is very keen indeed to get back to organizing some social events and we hope to be calling on you!

It's been a difficult year in lots of ways but how lucky we were to be able to play tennis for most of the year and I know for many it has been a bigger part of our lives than usual, keeping us fit both in mind and body. Many have described it as a lifesaver. Hurrah for the joy of tennis!

Finally, as you know, Peter and Judith Deck are stepping down from the committee this year and on behalf of our members I would like to say thank you to them both for being stalwart supporters of the club for many years, Peter providing a valuable link to Pewsey Parish Council and Judith filling a number of significant roles. They've both been quick to offer help whether it's providing a cake for a social do, or scrubbing graffiti off the clubhouse. We can't present you in person with a gift to show our thanks, but we have delivered you a gift and I propose we give you a Zoom clap as an alternative!

5. FINANCE

The accounts to 31st December 2020, as audited by Chris Harris, were presented by Matthew Popham. The combination of good membership numbers and lower costs in 2020, have meant that the club finances remain strong and the refurbishment fund target has been met. Reduced use of the club facilities due to Covid restrictions meant that running costs were well below budget.

Proposer: Peter Deck; **seconded:** Mike Hutchinson

6. COACHES' REPORTS

Martin Wright – Head Coach

I certainly will not be alone in saying the last twelve months have been challenging. We started the new membership year in Lockdown which saw the Club close and all related coaching activities. As a result our busy Easter Kids Camp and Tournament were unable to run. In addition, in the Summer term all our usual offerings were closed down, including, both adult and kids group sessions, cardio tennis, league coaching sessions as well as our outreach programme to the local Primary School, where we normally offer a free taster session to over 500 children, followed by an offer of further tennis within our Club setting. Our after school link with Pewsey Vale School, which was very

successful, has been put on hold and we are looking forward to re establishing our connection with the schools when we are able to.

Our return to tennis in May started with singles and one to one coaching only, followed some weeks later by groups of up to 6 including the coach and doubles play. The limit in numbers saw the cancellation of our very popular Summer Camps in August.

During the Summer I was blown away by the increase in membership and the general atmosphere and the club. The situation saw many people from the community joining who perhaps would not normally join a tennis club, including those who hadn't played for many years, perhaps tennis wasn't a sport they had tried before, and those who joined as their normal sport was unable to go ahead. It was great to see families utilising the club and enjoying time together. The demand for tennis was incredible and certainly something I will remember, along with the aches and pains of some very long days on court!

Almost all our usual activities resumed in September and even with the November Lockdown we managed to complete 9 out of the 10 weeks of group coaching. Demand for tennis remained high and we saw good numbers attending across our coaching offerings. It was fantastic to be able to coach groups again after a gap of nearly 6 months. Our Beginners to Players programme started at the end of September and was fully booked up. The six week course allows players to progress through planned sessions and ends with a light-hearted tournament on week six followed by a chance to socialise in the clubhouse. Clearly we had to make some changes and unbelievably due to the weather and Lockdowns we have only completed four of the six weeks. My thanks as always to Jane Watkins who puts in so much time and effort into organizing the B2P programme.

We had a good enrolment for the current term and managed just one day on the 4th of January before we had to close again. We have now had confirmation from the LTA stating coach ratios are the same as before so we can return to a full programme at the end of March.

The LTA have recently rebranded all Junior tennis under a new umbrella called LTA Youth, for ages 4 to 18. This includes new offerings, including LTA Youth Start, which is an introduction to tennis for children, which also gives their parents a chance to join in. New additions also include Youth Blue for ages 4 to 6 and Youth Yellow for ages 10 to 18. This new branding is clearer and also comes with a new competition framework. This makes competition for the majority of Club players much more accessible and fun. This is done through two strands. One for players who are wanting to compete seriously and improve their ranking and rating, and another strand for everyone including those who attend coaching groups and consists of fun team events with multiple winners and lots of prizes to make their experiences of competitions more positive. I'm excited about the new LTA Youth compete programme as it will create fantastic opportunities for our players.

Looking ahead we are excited to return to tennis and see our members and local community being able to again make the most of our fantastic club through coaching, competitive and social offerings. Pewsey Tennis Club is a very special place and this been even more noticeable during the last year. It's brilliant to be part of such a successful Club, I feel extremely privileged to be part of it. I must say a huge thank you to the hard working committee who have had to adjust quickly when rules have changed including being proactive and putting everything in place so we could open straightaway following the Lockdowns. Everyone on the committee contributes their time and work very hard to

keep our Club running so successfully. Of particular note Keith, who has spent many hours setting up and running the booking system, and Clare, who really has been dropped in at the deep end in her first year as Chair, she has been extremely supportive as well as being visible at the Club to meet and play with new and old members during Club sessions and in her free time. As always thanks to Jon for his continued hard work and helping to ensure everyone who attends coaching and the club has a welcoming and friendly experience. Finally to all our members, you all make the club the special place it is and create a brilliant and friendly atmosphere for everyone.

I look forward to seeing you all on court in a few weeks and I will now pass you over to Jon who will present his review on competitions.

Jon Gregory – Coach

As I am sure you can imagine the junior competitions programme was a bit of a non-starter in 2020. The coronavirus lockdown started a month before the Easter Tournament, so this and all the other junior competitions were cancelled for the summer, so as a result the Junior Summer League, Mini Tennis Fun Festival, Quorn Family Cup, Junior Club Tournaments, Road 2 Wimbledon and Club Matchplays were also all cancelled. After the return to tennis I was extremely cautious about running competitions due to the uncertain situation we found ourselves in. Therefore, I ran only 1 junior competition in 2020, which was a Matchplay for Club players in February, which nine 14U boys attended.

I wasn't idle though and through the period of my family shielding I ran an adult club singles tournament remotely from home, which attracted 34 Men's and 19 Ladies' entries. I hope this gave club members a fun opportunity to return to competitive tennis whilst still being able to follow social distancing guidelines! Upon return to court I also organized the adult club doubles events (Men's, Ladies' & Mixed) ably assisted by Nick Hewens and Paula Tailby. This attracted another excellent number of entries but has unfortunately been put on hold due to the November and January lockdowns. I hope to restart this again once the tennis club is allowed to open.

Anyway, enough about 2020! I am pleased to announce that the LTA is launching a new junior/adult competition framework in April to replace the current rating system. I can honestly say that the new framework is in theory the most fair and inclusive system that LTA have ever devised and I am excited to get the chance to facilitate competition for young players at our club and across the south. The new system has an emphasis on development and a much more friendly approach to competition. The WTN (World Tennis Number) that replaces the old ratings system will adjust for sets won and not just matches won and will also feature separate singles and doubles ratings for the first time! As a result, I am hoping that when I am allowed to, I can increase our competition offering significantly. Unfortunately, this has got off to a bad start as the Easter Tournament has had to be cancelled due to LTA Covid-19 guidelines, but I have tentatively entered teams from our club in the junior summer league and plan to offer Matchplays across the summer along with any other of the usual events that we run (mini tennis fun festival etc.) Fingers crossed I can safely put as many of these events on as possible!

I would also just like to thank you the committee and all of the tennis club. 2020 was an incredibly strange and difficult year for everyone including me and my family and I would just like to say that I have felt very supported by the club, and I can't tell you how grateful I am for that!

7. **MEMBERSHIP FEES FOR 2021/22**

Our Chair (CB) presented the proposed fees for 2021/22.

We expect this year to be a very different year to last year and hope that we will be able to play tennis throughout the year. The new season starts on 1st April and tennis is back on 29th March, with access to toilets and floodlights. From there we will soon start to go back to a normal year with club nights and social events and so on.

We are therefore proposing that we do not offer a discount this year but that subscription rates remain as originally proposed at last year's AGM. Thus:

Senior = £163

Family = £259

Off Peak = £98

Intermediate = £79

Student = £35

Junior 11 – 18 = £26

Junior U11 = Free

(NB, we supply free tennis balls; transmission risk to be discussed at the next committee meeting on 17th March.)

Question: Adrian Goodall asked if there was any provision for members who are unemployed members. CB responded that the matter had been discussed, but there was currently no plan to introduce a rate for the unemployed. She hoped that the Intermediate fee (for those aged 18-24) would help in this regard.

Proposer: Barbara Polden; **seconded** Judith Deck

8. **ELECTION OF THE COMMITTEE for 2021/22**

CB informed the AGM that all existing committee members were standing for the coming year, apart from Judith Deck and Peter Deck, who will be standing down from committee work.

The Committee listed below was voted in en bloc and agreed by the AGM:

Chair – Clare Bamforth

Vice-Chair/Facilities - Nick Hewens

Secretary – Amanda Hampson

Treasurer – Matthew Popham

Second Treasurer – Pauline Archer

Membership Secretary – Cathy Temple-Brown

Match Secretary/Projects – Keith Hampson

Social Secretary – Mike Hutchinson

Junior Rep – Mary Connorton

Marketing – Roz Denton

Head Coach – Martin Wright

Coach – Jon Gregory

(Welfare Officer – Debbie Crapper)

Proposer: Monica Ford; **seconded** Mike Hutchinson

9. **APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR – CHRIS HARRIS**

CB thanked Chris Harris for his second year of service, and his appointment for 2021/22 was accepted by the AGM.

Proposer: Jon Gregory; **seconded:** Keith Hampson

10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

CB gave further thanks to JD for her contribution to PTC over many years: Judith has been on the PTC committee for at least 21 years, and served as secretary for over 16 of those years. She has also been in charge of running the Wimbledon Ballot since 2008 and has been team captain for league matches. On top of that she manages the Ladies' Thursday morning session, providing a cheery welcome to new joiners. In appreciation of all that Judith has done, the committee has decided to make Judith an honorary life member of the club, which entitles her to free membership. This is not handed out lightly and it is well deserved. Judith, thank you again for your contribution.

MH presented two annual club awards (The third award Club Captain was not awarded as there were no league matches in the summer 2020 season, due to Covid restrictions.):

Most improved player: nominations – Olly Goodall, Emma Corbett, Roz Denton, Deborah Goodall, Sandy MacIntyre.

Winner: Roz Denton

Club member of the year: nominations – Sarah McCleod (inclusivity and sociability), Cathy Temple-Brown (membership work), Clare Bamforth (leadership in a difficult year with Covid), Keith Hampson (club booking system and website projects), Mary Martinsen (inclusivity), Roz and Paul Denton (marketing projects and work with new members, Join-in sessions).

Winner: Clare Bamforth

CB announced the committee proposal to increase the guest fee to £5.00/visit (from £3.00), with the number of visits per year increased to 6 (from 3).

Proposer: Mary Connorton; **seconded** Mike Hutchinson

Wimbledon tickets (28 June – 11 July 2021): JD explained the new centrally based LTA system for allocating Wimbledon tickets – individuals must opt-in, and then the LTA randomly allocates specific tickets to individuals (no longer done on a club basis). Email instruction to opt-in will be sent from the LTA in due course. Colin Gratton added that individuals who were successful in the ballot last year (no Wimbledon due to Covid) will be given the option to take up their tickets this year, so overall there may be fewer tickets available.

New Season – CB reported that tennis will resume on 29th March, with singles and doubles play permitted in line with the rule of 6. The court booking system will be operational one week before the 29th. League matches are likely to resume at the end of April (travel restrictions may apply), and club sessions will resume, along with clubhouse opening, when possible, and hopefully by the end of June.

On a final note, Colin Gratton, Club President, congratulated the club on its success in a challenging year. He said the club had grown in stature in both Pewsey and Wiltshire.

THE AGM CLOSED AT APPROX 9.00PM.