



SOMERSET LAWN TENNIS ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 4TH DECEMBER 2019

Attendees	
Nigel Barker	SLTA
Andy Fay	SLTA
Annie Smith	SLTA
John Gould	SLTA
Kerry Quirk	SLTA/Taunton Tennis Club
Karuna Tharmananthar	SLTA/Elms Lawn Tennis Club
Simon Brand	SLTA
John Barrington	SLTA/Trull Tennis Club
Rosemary Gilling	Cheddar Lawn Tennis Club
Dae Sasitorn	Cheddar Lawn Tennis Club
Stuart Mark	Stoke St Gregory Tennis Club
Kathy Davidson	Stoke St Gregory Tennis Club
Matthew Shooter	South Petherton Tennis Club
Jeremy Toye	Wiveliscombe Tennis Club
Ivor Griffiths	Taunton Tennis Club
Julie Williams	Minehead/Elms LTC
Cathy Alexander	Elms LTC
Paul Rees	Minehead Lawn Tennis Club
Gabriella Lang	Yeovil/Taunton Tennis Club
Tony May	Bridgwater Tennis Club
Di Woosley	Bridgwater Tennis Club
Barry Ramsden	Avenue Tennis Club
Sarah Strawbridge	Cheddar Lawn Tennis Club
Rachel Charles	Ilminster Tennis Club
Kim Hole	Wells Tennis Club
Richard Hole	Wells Tennis Club

Andy Fay welcomed everyone to the meeting.

- 1. LTA Tennis County Awards Presentation.** Nigel Barker presented the LTA Tennis Awards for the County.

Lifetime Achievement Award - Tony May

Volunteer of the Year - Mike Lynch, Taunton Tennis Club

Young Person of the Year - Gabriella Lang

Coach of the Year - Natalie Grinter

Community Award - Cathy Alexander/Jane Lindstrand, Elms Lawn Tennis Club

- 2. Apologies for absence**

Steve Beach - Misterton TC, Julie Sinkins - Millfield School, Sue Rackley - Wellington Tennis Club, Alan Young - Martock Tennis Club, Carole Beach, Marian Davis - Queen Camel Tennis Club, Bridgit Hodsman - Somerton Tennis Club, Natalie Grinter, Alison Hillyer - Brent Knoll Tennis Club

3. Minutes of AGM held on Wednesday, 5th December 2018

Minutes of last year's AGM had been circulated. No points were raised. The Minutes were proposed to be accepted by Karuna Tharmananthar, seconded by John Gould. Agreed by all with one abstention.

4. Chairman/LTA Councillor's Report

Andy Fay (AF) advised that as in previous years, he currently holds both positions of Chair for SLTA and LTA Councillor and has combined his report.

AF reflected on tennis at a national level firstly with the new format of the Davis Cup during which there were some excellent matches and with GB reaching the semi-finals, GB is ensured a place in the finals next year.

Kyle Edmund returned to his old self beating top class players and Neil Skupsi partnering Jamie Murry has shown to be a great partnership. Time will tell whether Andy Murray will make a comeback following his surgery. The Fed Cup is also changing and the big plan is to combine both men's and ladies' events within a 'World Cup' of tennis at one venue.

Scott Lloyd continues to push tennis forward through his 'Tennis Opened Up' programme which is an exciting opportunity for tennis. AF advised he attended the Tennis Industry Association Forum in October and was very impressed with the new initiatives being developed, along with the LTA, including padel tennis, walking tennis and cardio tennis and other versions of the sport that will appeal to a broader audience.

The Venue Registration process continues to evolve and this year the additional requirements to have all senior coaches (Level 3 and above) accredited was introduced. AF congratulated all venues who without exception successfully completed their Registration for 2019/2020. Next year, all Level 2 coaches used by clubs will need to be accredited. AF thanked Karuna Tharmananthar, County Safeguarding Officer, for his energy and support to venues with safeguarding.

AF congratulated Kerry Quirk who played for GB Ladies Over 40's in Florida and Jackie Boothman from Chard who represented the Ladies 75's at the ITF Super Seniors event.

Another successful County Championships this year run brilliantly by Debbie Butland. The tournament continues to attract a good range of players. AF advised he entered the Open Men's Doubles event with Paul Rees and thoroughly enjoyed the experience and it was great to see the excellent way in which other matches were played. AF urged attendees to encourage their junior and senior members to enter.

AF was involved with the Ladies Division 3B Winter County Cup at Blackbrook. All those attending commented on the great facilities and good accommodation - Premier Inn and Holiday Inn Express. Notts were the winners. The Somerset ladies and men's teams both stayed in their divisions despite facing some very strong opposition. Well done to them and their Captains, Dan Manlow and Zoe Leach.

A recent Club Forum focused on clubs and how they could retain as well as increase membership by identifying their audiences/local communities as well as thinking about their legal status and whether it is most beneficial to a club. Forums in the New Year will follow this theme and hopefully provide clubs with some tools to deliver on those ambitions.

AF advised he was going to speak about something that hasn't gone well for the county and invited questions. In early 2016, Royal Bank of Canada's sponsorship of Somerset LTA ceased abruptly for various reasons. Consequently, SLTA linked forces with Buckinghamshire LTA to seek alternative arrangements. They had access to a number of tennis minded sponsors who would welcome SLTA's inclusions in their plans. Not unsurprisingly, much of the incentive for the sponsorship was based around an opportunity to gain access to Wimbledon tickets. Regrettably, one of these parties decided to sell on these tickets to third parties in contravention of the AELTC rules and in breach of our understanding of the arrangements. This matter is still being pursued by the LTA to make sure there were no breaches of AELTC rules as this may affect future allocations of tickets. To reassure everyone, AF advised that as far as SLTA are concerned, they acted in good faith and no one benefitted from this arrangement apart from tennis in Somerset. However, this may have an impact on future sponsorship opportunities outside the County and John Gould will refer to this in his Treasurer's report. By way of note, there are 39 'counties' represented

within the LTA Council and the agency used was also used by 14 other counties and administered by a Council member who sits on the Wimbledon tickets Working Group at the LTA.

AF reported on SLTA Council plans for 2020 and beyond. As part of the LTA outreach programme, a review of longer term planning is being held. SLTA is looking to produce a blueprint to develop tennis in Somerset over the next 5 to 10 years which will include how SLTA communicate with venues, how the development of local coaches is encouraged and how County tennis is delivered to better promote the sport and support those with real talent to the highest level. Proposals will be circulated to all clubs when feedback will be requested.

AF gave a few thank you's :-

- to all volunteers who drive the game, especially Chairs and lead volunteers in each venue. AF invited anyone who would like to get involved with the County Association to contact one of the Council and advised Council members would be happy to attend any club's AGM.
- To all Captains of the various County teams
- To Simon Brand for a successful County training programme and another successfully run junior County Cup season
- To the rest of the Council who all work hard for the benefit of Somerset tennis and to Annie who supports SLTA across all areas whilst providing first contact for clubs.
- A special thank you to John Gould who has not only taken on the Treasurer role but is also driving the Small Grants and Loans Committee.

5. Treasurer's Report

Attendees were issued with a copy of the accounts to 30th September 2019 which had been reviewed by SLTA's independent examiner, Simon Bruce, who found they fairly reflect the County's financial position.

The County's income has fallen by £18K on a like for like basis when compared with last year. Sponsorship fell by £13K, the main LTA Grant fell by £2.5K and Other Income by £2.5K. Additional income, new for this year, of £11K has been received in respect of the County Training programme.

The loss of sponsorship and the reduction in other income is directly related to the Wimbledon tickets that did not reach potential sponsors to generate income and the fact that the County was still charged for their cost. The Grant award was reduced because the County did not apply to run mini tennis and junior tennis tournaments. Income from Club Registrations has increased slightly.

Spending on club support has been low in the last few years but this year successful applications have increased significantly and the County has been able to support clubs with awards totalling £26K. This includes £20K for the improvement of facilities, £3K for coach support, £2K for marketing initiatives and £1K to wheelchair tennis.

Spending on competitions has increased by £7.5K as was planned. This increase has been partly due to the 'per diem' now paid to County Cup teams to formalise the claiming of subsistence costs. In addition, the County has also recognised the need to improve safeguarding for junior County Cup teams and now ensures that two coaches travel with each teams. The LTA, our patrons and sponsors continue to fund these costs.

Annie Smith at the County Office has increased the hours she devotes to Somerset business and continues to provide the Council with essential support including the organisation of Council meetings and the AGM, fielding general enquiries, promoting county, club and school competitions, administering venue registration and processing grant and loan applications. WhiteBruce, our advisors on tax and accounting matters, have also been retained to provide advice on Corporation Tax liability. This support provided has led, as was expected, to an increase in administrative costs of almost £5K.

The LTA has now produced guidance on how counties should treat any profits and the payment of Corporation Tax. The Council, with the support of WhiteBruce, is in the process of undertaking a review of its processes to minimise any tax liability. In line with previous policy, these accounts reflect a provision for tax on sponsorship at the full rate for another year, but the Council hopes that it will be able to mitigate these costs and return a significant portion of this provision to available reserves during 2020.

The balance sheet now reflects this year's loss of £39K. Our reserves stand at £66K of which cash reserves are £122K.

To support the main statement of income and expenditure, JG provided a copy of the management report regularly prepared for the Council and showing more detail on individual items together with comparisons with previous years and budget. The core budget for 2019/20, a copy of which is also supplied in the pack, shows a more conservative assessment of sponsorship income awaiting the outcome of the investigation into this year's events. Participation, competition and county training expenditure is maintained at a similar level to this year, but a lower figure has been set for the support of the county's clubs to ensure that the County can adequately fund future activities. Central to this will be the potential write-back of tax provisions. The Council will continue to monitor the financial position and reduce spend if income levels are not maintained.

A strategic planning exercise is presently underway with support from the LTA's Regional Team and it is hoped results of this exercise will be published in 2020.

The accounts have been reviewed by Independent Examiner who is satisfied they provide a true and fair view of the Association's financial affairs as at 30th September 2019. JG proposed firstly that the meeting accept the accounts and secondly the Association retains WhiteBruce to review its accounts for another year. Seconded by Kerry Quirk. All agreed.

Small Grants & Loan Scheme

The Somerset LTA Small Grants & Loan Scheme is available to registered venues to help the development of tennis and SLTA would like to encourage venues to apply. SLTA Funding is also available for coaches and future coaches who are committed to supporting Tennis in Britain by assisting with the cost of the course.

Coaching

The Council continues to work with Somerset based coaches to provide financial assistance to extend their qualifications. During the financial year, seven individuals had up to 50% of their course fees paid by the Council when they undertook training for Level 1 to Level 4 qualifications. £1,700 was spent during the year and £7,500 has been budgeted to be spent next year. This will include the support of an apprenticeship where GLL (now everyoneactive) has partnered the County in the past. If a suitable new partner can be found, £5,000 is available.

Marketing

The Council supported 9 clubs last year and contributed almost £3,000 towards club-run marketing events aimed at increasing membership. The activities supported were mostly Open Days and associated costs including advertising and preparation of marketing materials. Many clubs find this type of event essential to attract new members and often arrange their event to coincide with the LTA promoted Nature Valley Tennis Weekends.

All Clubs in Somerset can apply for a match funded grant of up to £500, each year to assist with this type of event and we look forward to seeing as many venues as possible taking up the opportunity next year.

Facilities

The largest grants (normally up to £3,000 but in some cases £5,000) are reserved for venues wishing to extend the facilities available and so encourage more tennis to be played by more people. The match funding requirement of the grant means that applicants must make a significant contribution themselves and so suitable projects can be few. However, over £20,000 was paid out to 8 clubs during the year. If in doubt, do ask for advice and Council members will be only too happy to discuss and understand the Club's plans and look at how the Council can best assist.

The Council's policy is to avoid paying for maintenance projects, where venues are expected to ensure they hold an adequate sinking fund to cover such works, but where an initiative involves improvements that

will see the Club able to promote more tennis to more people then the application will receive a sympathetic hearing.

In certain cases, a loan may be the best option and here the monies provided will eventually be returned and made available for other venues to use in the future.

6. Safeguarding

KT thanked clubs for all their work this year and last to meet the new standards required for Registration. 5 clubs have been audited by Stuart Parsons, Regional Safeguarding Officer for the South & South West Region. An area for improvement which has been highlighted from the audits is how to display and communicate policies, it's important that all members can view these easily. Feedback received is that audit meetings have been constructive. Some clubs have Assistant Welfare Officers which is good to see.

A real risk exists with safeguarding issues, there have been 45 referrals in 2019 in the South & South West Region, 11% have been referred to the Police and 60% to child services. Everyone has a role to play to ensure clubs are safe, this is not just the role of the Welfare Officers.

KT advised there is a link on the LTA website called 'Reporting your Concern', all existing and new club members should be aware of this. KT also advised that polices should be taken to Annual General Meetings and endorsed.

There is now a much better general awareness of safeguarding and there is some great work going on.

7. Captain's Reports

a) Men's Captain - Dan Manlow

Summer County Cup - promoted to Group 3 - an optimistic Somerset side travelled to the pristine grass courts of Cromer to make an assault on Group 4. Having stayed in the division in 2018, the Cidermen were optimistic of pushing on, in search of a promotion that would see them back in the nation's top 3 tiers. Captain Dan Manlow named a strong side, including former top 500 players Richard Gabb and James Marsalek, Harvard graduate and Somerset stalwart Alistair Felton, Priddy's Sam Edwards and youngsters James Edwards and Matt Crofts. Not forgetting the inclusion of legendary former British number 1 and world top 100 Andrew Castle!

After coming through a 5-4 dog fight with North Wales on day 1, Somerset were looking strong. Castle remained undefeated on day 2 helping Somerset to a 6-3 win over Hampshire which was backed up with a 9-0 drubbing of West Country rival Dorset. The Cidermen fell on the Thursday to a very strong Nottinghamshire outfit, leaving them needing only 4 rubbers against Leicestershire to seal promotion. Despite rain delays, the formidable pairings of Manlow/Felton and Gabb/Marsalek secured the rubbers to send Somerset back up into Division 3. The Cidermen thoroughly enjoyed their trip to the east coast in which they saw clear blue skies, high temperatures and many post match dips in the North Sea!

Winter 2019, 3rd in Group - after 2 comprehensive promotions in as many years, the Somerset Winter County Cup side were looking to maintain momentum heading into a Division 4 showdown with hosts Nottinghamshire, West of Scotland and Leicestershire. Somerset were led by veterans Manlow, Felton and Gabb but unfortunately lost Marsalek to illness the day before the event started. Crofts, James Edwards, an ailing James Mitchell and Cheddar's Richard Fay made up the rest of the Somerset roster.

Day 1 saw the West of Scotland take a 3-0 lead picking up wins at 6, 5 and 4, before Felton, Manlow and Gabb levelled the match with commanding wins. Unfortunately the West proved too strong in doubles and claimed the tie 5-4.

Somerset knew they would have their work cut out at the bottom of the lineup again on day 2 vs Notts and were quickly 4-0 down. Manlow and Gabb hit back with wins at 1 and 2 to keep the match alive heading into doubles, which saw Notts pick up the 1 remaining rubber at #3 to condemn Somerset to another close 5-4 loss.

Survival Sunday rolled around and promised another tantalising day of tennis in a group that saw only 1 match finish with a score different to 5-4. Somerset needed to beat Leicestershire in a

straight shootout to retain division 4 status. James Mitchell came off the injury bench to push Crofts and Fay down to 5 and 6 which proved decisive. Crofts picked up Somerset's only win from positions 4-6 all weekend which meant that wins from Felton, Manlow and Gabb put Somerset 4-2 up heading into doubles and needing only 1 win to survive. Felton and Manlow provided that crucial win by way of a tie break third set and Somerset escaped relegation by the skin of their teeth!

The Somerset men's team would like thank everyone in the county for their support and backing this year. The team in in good standing having earned promotion back to Division 3 in summer and will look to push on in July 2020 as they head to The Yorkshire Dales of Ilkley to test themselves once more.

b) Ladies Captain - Zoe Leach

Summer - Cambridge - promoted to Division 4

The ladies team enjoyed an unbeaten week this year in Cambridge winning the Group and earning promotion to Division 4. On an extremely hot week, we enjoyed wins over Bedfordshire, East of Scotland, Herefordshire & Worcestershire, Staffordshire and Wiltshire. A special shout out to Grace Piper and Nirva Patel for winning 15 out of 15 matches and Natalie Ackland for winning 12 out of 12 matches. Also a big thank you to John Gould for visiting us, it was great to have spectators for the day.

Ladies Winter County Cup - Sunderland - stayed in Division 2

After winning promotion last year, we faced some very strong counties in Division 2. After a 5-4 loss to Yorkshire and 6-3 loss to Northumberland we had a relegation battle on the final day. Some great performances saw us take a 6-0 lead over Sussex after the singles matches to secure our place in Division 2 for next year. The last time we reached Division 2 we very quickly got relegated again so it was a great team effort to stay in the Division and made the long trip very worthwhile.

Thanks to the County for the continued support.

c) County Seniors Officer

SLTA has 6 teams who compete in the men's Seniors County Championships - 45s, 50s, 60s, 65s, 70s and 75s and 5 ladies teams, 40's, 50's, 60's, 65's and 70's. The 45's men's and 40's ladies teams both had outstanding results with the 45's men's finishing 3rd in Division 1, only losing to Surrey and Yorkshire. The 40's ladies team won all of their 5 matches and were promoted to Division 1. The ladies 70's team came 2nd in Division 2. The 60s ladies team had some tough matches with the prospect of relegation going to the last rubber between Somerset and Gloucester, unfortunately, Somerset were relegated. John Barrington thanked all the men's captains and on behalf of Carole Beach, the ladies captains. Also on behalf of Carole Beach, John thanked the county for their support with ladies team 'get togethers'.

8. County Tennis Report including County Training

Simon Brand reported.

County Cup Results :-

18U Boys Group 6b - 3rd
18U Girls Group 3b - 1st

14U Boys Group A - 4th
14U Girls Group D - 5th

12U Boys Group E - 6th
12U Girls Group E - 4th

10U Boys Group E - 6th

10U Girls Group E - 4th

9U Mixed Group J - 4th

County Training is in year 2 of the LTA Scheme. SB was pleased to report that a lot has been learned. All age groups receive one session per month which are held at Taunton and Millfield, SB thanked both venues for their support with the use of facilities. Two Level 4/5 coaches take the sessions so players are receive top quality training.

There are spaces available in all squads but particularly 9s, 10s and 12 girls and clubs were requested to contact one of the county coaches if they had any players that demonstrate ability. All players who attend County Training are eligible to play in County Cup.

Notably, Somerset field boys and girls teams in all County Cup age groups, congratulations to the 18U girls team who won their Group this year. In 2020, an additional age group, 11U, will be added to County Cup.

Coach Development - as part of the Small Grants Scheme, funding is available to coaches wishing to gain qualifications. 50% of the course fees are potentially available, coaches will be asked to demonstrate they will stay within the county for one year.

The LTA run an annual Coach Forum which is open to all coaches, this year it was in Taunton where 35 attended. Somerset are trying to get more courses in Somerset, the LTA have pledged to do this.

Two Coach Workshops have been run at Millfield and one at Taunton. Although no coach credits have been available for the workshops, they have been excellent for coach networking. The workshops were free with lunch provided afterwards.

JB added congratulations to Grace Piper who won the U18 National Championships.

9. Disability Report

A wheelchair event was held at the County Championships for the first time which was very successful with four ladies taking part, singles and doubles. While these events were being played, a Visually Impaired Festival for 15 juniors also took place. Ebony Court who received funding from SLTA has played in a number of tournaments coming third in singles and runner-up in doubles at the Nationals. She has helped Ivor Griffiths establish taster wheelchair session in Yeovil which it is hoped will develop further in 2020.

Ellie Brimacombe is to play in Somerset's 'Triples' events along with able bodied players on 28th December.

Learning Disabilities sessions have unfortunately been reduced due to the removal of local funding for transport linked to the special needs homes. However, a link has been established with Selworthy Special School for children in Taunton and Coach Andrew Disney is attending there on a weekly basis.

Looking ahead to 2020, it is hoped Visually Impaired sessions will take place in Yeovil. Walking Tennis is a new project for the New Year. It is also proposed to expand what is currently 'Touch Tennis' to encompass people who have suffered from a stroke, dementia, Multiple Sclerosis or mental health issues.

Ivor Griffiths requested that clubs and coaches contact him if they think they may be able to organise on a local basis any sort of disability, now called 'Open Court' programme that may be of benefit to the local community.

An Activator Course was recently held to encourage more people to get involved with teaching or coaching tennis and becoming assistants either with able bodied or 'open court'. The enthusiasm from attendees was so great it is intended to organise another in the summer which will be more 'open court' focused.

10. Election of Officers for the ensuing year showing nominations

- a) President - Nigel Barker
- b) Chair - Andy Fay
- c) LTA Councillor - Andy Fay
- d) Treasurer - John Gould
- e) Secretary - Kerry Quirk

Proposed en bloc by Paul Rees, seconded by Kim Hole and agreed unanimously.

Nigel Barker proposed 4 Members be elected on-bloc, seconded by Kerry Quirk, all agreed.

- f) John Barrington - County Seniors Officer
- g) Karuna Tharmananthar - Safeguarding Officer
- h) Simon Brand - County Training and Coach Development
- i) Neil Driver
- j) Clive Ross

11. Election of Independent Examiner

White Bruce Accountants.

Proposed by John Gould, seconded by Andy Fay. Unanimously agreed.

12. Any Other Business

Karuna Tharmananthar thanked Andy Fay for all the work he does for Somerset.

AF thanked everyone for attending the AGM. The meeting closed at 2050 hours.

Signed Date