

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE TENNIS SECTION OF THE AVENUE LAWN TENNIS, SQUASH AND FITNESS CLUB - held on Thursday 26th October 2017

Present: Binky Hallett (Club Chairman), Mike Colbourne (Tennis Secretary) and 39 other tennis members: Richard Ainscow, Colin Airton, Richard Belfrage, George Bentley, Marcus Blake, Janet Boaz, Matt Boucher, Paul Brown, Pat Chalmers, Simon Cole, Nigel Coote, Sadia Ellis, Mark Fullstone, Andy Gilliatt, Annette Hart, Mike Hodgetts, Vince Ibbs, Imogen Karas, Richard Light, Rob Mort, Francis Palmer, Ruth Percival, Lynda Pine, Robin Reucroft, Sue Reucroft, Sara Robson, Alan Sherwood, Irene Smalley, Jonathan Smith, Ros Sotnick, Sue Sparshatt, Jeff Tarvin, Neil Tigg, Michelle Voysey, Lynn Wade, Jenny Ward, Jenny Watton, Doug Yelland and Michael Young.

Binky Hallett chaired the meeting.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies were received from Neil Crawford, Chris Green, Yana Haskell, Russell Howarth, Rebecca Howarth, Tony Jones, Nicolette Lock, Kevin Matchan, Rosie Matchan and David Perks.

2. MINUTES OF LAST TENNIS SECTION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (held 27th October 2016)

2.1 Minutes of the last meeting were accepted. Proposed by: Nigel Coote; Seconded by: Lynda Pine.

2.2 All actions from the last meeting have been completed.

3. MATTERS DISCUSSED:

3.1 Role of the Tennis Committee.

(a) There was a general discussion on the role of the Tennis Committee and its relationship with the Management Committee.

(b) It was agreed that the Management Committee had more of a strategic role in the running of The Avenue covering :

- Financial control of all sections;
- Management of staff;
- Property matters;
- Assets;
- Governance;

- Health and Safety matters.

(c) Section committees were responsible for all playing / activity matters.

(d) Notwithstanding the above, the true roles of each of the Section Committees needs to be more clearly defined.

(e) There is too much division in the Club, we are all 'Avenue members' not tennis players, squash players, etc.

(f) Having reached the point of appointing a new Head Tennis Coach who, for the first time, will provide an income stream for the Club the Chairman agreed that this process now needs to be extended to cover the Squash Coach.

3.2 Team selection process

(a) This is an important item in that the Club has a large number of teams (28 during the summer season) and there are a lot of long standing and recently joined new players who would like to play. There are some concerns amongst certain members that getting to play in teams does not always seem easy. A policy is needed on how teams are set up and organised with clearly defined parameters that determine player selection.

(b) The Men's Captain has produced 'The Avenue Team Tennis Charter' which addresses these concerns:

The Avenue Team Tennis Charter

Competitive team tennis is an important aspect of our tennis at The Avenue. We want everyone to feel that teams are well-led, selection is fair and that the process of competitive tennis at our club is open and transparent.

Our new team tennis charter reflects these principles and can be easily remembered as:

R: *we follow the Rules of the leagues in which we play at all times.*

E: *we understand the Etiquette of tennis and bring this into our match play.*

S: *teams reflect the appropriate level of Skills and Standards.*

P: *we Play to win!*

E: *captains give squad players Equal opportunities to play.*

C: *we are open to constructive Challenge at all times.*

T: *Team selection is fair and open and Transparent.*

This charter reflects the principles which team captains will aim to adopt at all times. High quality and inclusive teams will help us to continue to attract high calibre players and bring success to The Avenue. We want players to feel that the teams at The Avenue are well-led, well supported by players and the club coach, and provide opportunities to progress for all who would wish to do so.

Mens Captain - Andy Gilliatt 07815 120029
Ladies Captain - Sara Robson 07966 506398

16th October 2017

4. GROUNDS REPORT

4.1 Update on Grass court improvements

A project team consisting of Neil Crawford, Richard Steeds and Mike Colbourne worked on a plan for Fraise mowing the grass courts over 2 years (5 courts each year). This would have been funded by the LTA who have an objective to support the maintenance and development of good quality grass courts throughout the UK.

As the plan was developed the team received a lot of feedback from players via the Seniors Tournament, County Week and visiting match teams about the excellent quality of our courts. This view is also reflected in the reports we receive from the STRI (Sports Turf Research Institute) each year when they inspect our courts pre County Week. Therefore, after much work and deliberation the Tennis Committee concluded that, although the money was being provided at no cost to ourselves, that the benefits would be minimal against some risks and interruption to usage. It should also be noted that the estimates received from the various contractors recommended by the LTA were way above the LTA's expectations.

Most importantly for the club is that the ground anchors and net posts needed renewing and resetting to the correct levels (most of the nets are horizontal from 20+ years of top soiling each autumn rather than having a 6 inch drop from net post to the centre point of the net). The LTA agreed to grant £10K towards this (almost the total cost) so it was agreed to progress this in the autumn. The work was successfully carried out by Chiltern Sports in late September.

In conclusion, in spring 2018 the grass courts should open with new net post anchors, net posts, nets, centre straps and centre strap anchors. We will then be a club with 17 high quality tennis courts in prime condition giving members 3 different surfaces to play on.

4.2 Doug Yelland (County Week organiser) expressed his disappointment that the Club had missed a golden opportunity to level the grass courts by not proceeding with the fraise mowing.

4.3 Following possibly the best season ever for the quality of play of the grass courts. A VOTE OF THANKS WAS AWARDED TO GRAHAM BROOKS AND BEN PITT OUR TWO GROUNDSMEN FOR THEIR EFFORTS OVER THE LAST YEAR.

4.4 Marc Blake who joined the Club in 1963 is finally stepping down as Grounds Chair. A VOTE OF THANKS WAS AWARDED TO MARC FOR HIS EFFORTS OVER ALL THESE YEARS.

4.5 Doug Yelland stated that after next year's County Week he will be standing down as organiser of the event. In addition his team of Tony Jones, Marc Blake and Derek Manvell, who along with Doug set up the screens and skirts for the various summer tournaments, will also be standing down. For future years a new team of volunteers will need to be recruited to carry out these important tasks.

5. COACHES' REPORT

5.1 Chris Green (Interim Head Tennis Coach) forwarded the following report:

- a) Programme: The coaching programme has remained fully operational with the team that has been put together. Group numbers are 'healthy' for what can be an unpredictable period.
- b) The first new addition to the programme is: Parent & Toddler; a session where parents and young tots are both on court together, indoors if needed. It's a great way to get new kids into the programme and get non-members physically coming to the Avenue.
- c) The introduction of the new website and programme/club info brochure, has made it clear to customers that they will save money on coaching by becoming members. Quite a few have finally joined as members.
- d) September Figures:
 - Total Players on Programme (Active): 176
 - Number of Members on Programme: 147
 - Number of Non-Members on Programme: 29
 - Income from Non-Members (Not including Time4Tennis guest fees-paid into office weekly): £234
- e) School Report: In September School links have been set up with the following:

- Bosmere Junior School - retained
- Hartplain Infant School - retained
- Warblington School - new
- St.Albans Primary School - new
- Padnell Junior School - new

f) Staff (Active):

Coaches:

- Chris Green - Level 4 (Accredited)
- Emma Boucher - Level 2 hoping to do Level 3 soon (Accredited)
- Sara Robson - Level 2 (Accredited) Ryan Cooper - (Level 1 pending)

Tennis Apprentice:

- Antonio Mironovic: Currently on Level 1

g) Social Media: Facebook pages, Instagram and a YouTube account have been set up. Posting on all platforms is building a bigger following.

h) Website & promotional material: Good feedback has been received on the new website and especially the new promotional video which highlights key information regarding the academy and the location of the club itself. The noticeboard has been updated to give a more modern and professional look to people passing by.

i) Mini/Junior competition info: For the first time in years the club has entered our Mini and Juniors into the Aegon winter league to try and raise the competitive profile of the academy.

j) The pro shop has been running 6 days a week and has given more opportunities to players to get restrings, accessories and other advice from the coaches who are manning the shop around their coaching hours.

k) Match practice has now reverted to an open session every Wednesday night. Since Chris started match practice last year it has proven to be a big hit, not only helping teams to improve their game and results, but in bringing the whole club team community closer together and with it a good buzz. Chris would like to thank everybody for their commitment towards the class, in particular Andy Gilliatt. The other week there were 30+ team players (including first team players) playing across 6 courts.

6. CAPTAIN'S REPORTS

6.1 Men's Report - headlines:

(a) The Wednesday Night Team Training sessions which started last summer have become very popular. They are open to all team players and anyone who wants to become a team player.

(b) The Avenue's 45+ A team won the Hampshire Division 1 doubles league for 2017. Ten players participated throughout the season to secure the trophy by the tightest of margins!

(c) A Touchtennis Taster Tournament was held on Saturday 26th August on court number 5. 'Touch Tennis' is the new fun racquet sport sweeping the nation. (Check it out on YouTube). Organised by Andy Gilliatt and Steve Nightingale over 20 players turned up for a very enjoyable session. Regular sessions are held on the artificial grass courts on Friday evenings - any member is welcome to turn up and give it a go.

(d) A national Touchtennis tour event is to be held at The Avenue on Sunday 3rd June. Courts 8, 9 and 10 will be used with court 7 closed off so there is a gap - it will still leave 6 courts free for mix-in. The plan would be to mark out 4 touch tennis courts on courts 8 and 9, and then 3 on court 10, one of these being the show court. Marking out will be done using a spray that is removed simply by using water. The spray is guaranteed to not leave any residue.

6.2 Ladies Report - headlines:

(a) The ladies 3rd team (aka the 4^{ths} in the winter) have fought hard to earn promotion to the 3rd division this season coming second to Southsea who fielded a strong newly established second team.

(b) We have had a few epic matches including one home match where Anne Treagust and Helen Cooper battled it out against Lee with their first rubber taking 3 hours (our win). The opposition were then forced to retire.

6.3 For the first time the Club held an Awards Night where trophies and prizes were given out to members to reward their efforts on and off court throughout the year. The evening was very successful, superbly organised by Sara Robson and Jordan Goff and brilliantly hosted by Jonathan Smith.

7. SOCIAL TENNIS REPORT

7.1 Lynda Pine presented the following report:

Unfortunately closing the grass courts earlier than normal to allow for the replacement of the net post anchors, restricted the mix-in group from a potential 9 courts to just 3 at the end of the season. Coupled with this has been an increase in popularity for the mix-ins over the last two years. This has partly been due to the coaches attracting new members with their private coaching and long running programmes such as 'Rusty Rackets'.

The mild weather in October meant that there were up to 40 members turning up on Tuesday nights and Saturday afternoons. There were players waiting for up to an hour in between games, leading to much discontent. The players were also unhappy to see clay courts 13 and 14 being taken up with youngsters playing singles who would then move onto clay courts 11 and 12 for coaching.

Consequently an extra 2 courts were requested for Saturday afternoons and Tuesday evenings. This alleviated the situation but brought complaints from other members who wanted to play private games at the same time.

The floodlighting has been organised to come on at dusk on Tuesday and Thursday evenings (Thursday is still just 3 courts), and off about 9.00pm, although most of the players have finished at 8.00pm. The mix-in players have been asked to either report to the Club office (which is often still open to 8.00pm on Tuesdays) or to inform the bar staff when lights are no longer required on individual courts so that they can be turned off to save electricity.

Those members that would like to play at mix-ins are most welcome to come along and join in. The standard has been improving steadily and team members should also come along and have a game.

8. MAJOR EVENTS FOR NEXT YEAR

8.1 The following tournaments are planned to be held at the Club next year:

- (a) Touch Tennis Tournament - Sunday 3rd June 2018.
- (b) Open Seniors' Tournament - 17th to 22nd June 2018.
- (c) Aegon Summer County Cup (Ladies Division 2) - 16th to 20th July 2018.
- (d) Junior Tournament grade 4 LTA - 20th to 25th August.

9. ELECTION OF TENNIS COMMITTEE OFFICERS

9.1 The following officers were appointed:

Honorary Tennis Secretary: *Mike Colbourne*

Honorary Match Secretary: *Rob Mort*

Men's Captain: *Andy Gilliatt*

Ladies' Captain: *Sara Robson / Imogen Karas*

Honorary Junior Secretary: *Ruth Percival / Yana Haskell*

Grounds Committee Chair: *vacant*

Social Tennis Representative: *Lynda Pine*

Members' Representative: *Doug Yelland*

Proposed: *Vince Ibbs*

Seconded: *Lynda Pine*

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 Roger and Tracy Manvell left the Club at the end of August after over 18 years as the Clubs Tennis Professionals. They have been granted life-long membership of The Avenue.

10.2 The Tennis Byelaws are to be rewritten to include the court booking system that was introduced last year for the hard courts.

10.3 It was agreed that the date for next year's AGM would be brought forward by one week to avoid school half term.

10.4 Meeting closed at 9.20 pm.

Mike Colbourne
Honorary Tennis Secretary

18 December 2017