

## **HADLEIGH TENNIS CLUB**

### **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** **HELD ON 30<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2012** **AT THE ANSELL CENTRE AT 7.30PM**

**Present:** Geoff Scott (Chairman); Brian Dicks (Treasurer); Paul Knowles (Secretary); Peter Richards (President); Kate White; Jan Richards; Jo Newman; Sarah Hawker; Bob Crisp; Debra Young; Liz Allan; Sandy Claireaux; Gill Wilson; Linda Dhondy.

**1 Apologies:** Bill Bailey, Trevor Rowland, Jonathan Chown; Eunice Scott; Edward Hills; Angela Forrest; Jill Dutton.

**2 Minutes of the 2011 AGM** were distributed at the meeting and agreed and accepted without amendment. Proposed by Peter Richards and seconded by Brian Dicks.

#### **3 Matters Arising:**

There were no matters arising.

#### **4 Chairman's Report**

It has been a memorable year for the Club with our 130 Year Celebration last summer being the highlight. I am sure you will agree with me that it was a great success, very enjoyable and well worth the significant effort from all those who helped. Special thanks must go to Peter Richards for driving the organisation and the on-the-day delivery. The folks at Bildeston Tennis Club are keen to reciprocate and the friendship between the two clubs I am sure will continue.

Through the Club's long and illustrious history the number of members has fluctuated. The inscriptions on the Men's Singles trophy show that there were understandable gaps in play during the World Wars. In recent memory the playing members were down to just a handful and were gradually built back up through the efforts and enthusiasm of the few left who persuaded their friends to take up the sport ..... ask Peter for details. You have probably detected that in the last year we have had fewer members than in 2010. While this ebb and flow of players is to be expected, in the coming year the Club will need to attract new people to guard against further decline. Around 40 members is a healthy number for the Club to be able to offer the amount of quality tennis and other benefits we have become used to.

From the evidence we have the Club has always run Team and Tournament Tennis in addition to Club Sessions and ad hoc events. Naturally, with members' support we intend to continue these activities. In the last couple of years the Committee has reviewed the success of our Tournament events and debated how to attract more members to participate. However we have not yet discovered a magic formula for success. Looking forward to the coming season this is an area where, as a Club, we could improve our enjoyment. Any suggestions you may have about Tournaments and any other aspects of the Club would be welcomed by the Committee.

Again this year I would like to record my thanks to Philip Ainger, who as the manager of the Layham Road Sports Ground, has responded promptly to our maintenance needs. Also my sincere thanks go to the President and those who have served on the Committee for their support through the year. They have given their time and energies free of charge in support of the Club's Members and it is very much appreciated by us all.

#### **5 Treasurer's Report**

A copy of the summary of the 2011 Accounts for the period 1<sup>st</sup> January - 31<sup>st</sup> December (attached) was circulated to those present and the Treasurer clarified the figures therein. First, grateful thanks were expressed to Bob Crisp who had very kindly checked through the accounts for us and verified them against our bank statements.

The overall financial position for 2011 is that the Club had made a loss of £492. Although some financial loss had occurred as a result of expenditure on the 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebratory event in June, which included repainting of the clubhouse, this was more than offset by a very successful Christmas meal and quiz.

The costs of court hire, light tokens and balls were slightly higher than the previous year, but LTA fees and other expenses were less, so the overall running costs of the Club in 2011 were only slightly higher than in 2010. The main reason for the loss in 2011 has been a fall in membership. The Club had reached a peak in membership in 2010 with 55 playing members (43 senior, 12 student), but this had fallen to 42 in 2011 (36 senior, 6 student), partly as a result of students and others moving away.

The treasurer expressed some concern over potential further losses of members in the early part of 2012 and it is clear that a sustained effort regarding recruitment will be necessary to ensure the continued success of the Club. Nevertheless, the Club's financial position remains viable in the short term as we have £4,382 in the bank. This includes £2,700 from an interest-free LTA loan (which is being repaid at £60 per month) but which could be used for urgent expenditure if needed. The Club assets in cash terms are thus £1,682, but note that £167 of this sum is the residue of a coaching grant award made to Lee Tweed, which is available to our current coach Laurence Oakley Ward for coaching development.

Peter Richards suggested that the accounts should list the LTA loan and repayments under a separate heading to ensure that when viewing the accounts, we will always be aware of the debt.

## **6 Captains' Reports**

### Men's – Jonathon Chown

We had a great summer season, struggled a bit due to lots of players leaving, moving, or going off to university, but still managed to avoid the drop. We even managed to compete when only playing two out of the required three pairs in almost half of our matches!

Youngsters like Ben and Dom played regularly which is encouraging from the point of view of getting younger players enthused etc. There were a few memorable victories over previous Hadleigh'er Barry Hunter, which are always satisfying!

Winter league is underway and we are doing fairly well in division two, hoping to avoid the drop and remain in that position. We do desperately need more players for the upcoming summer league where we move from two pairs to three.

Unfortunately I'm going to have to step down as captain at the end of the floodlit season - living and working in Ipswich means that I'm struggling to get to Hadleigh enough to make it work. It's been great fun, and I think we are in a good position moving up the summer leagues in the second division of the floodlit league.

Apologies!

I won't be able to make the AGM as we have a men's match that evening- hopefully Trevor can be excused too - otherwise we won't get a team out!

### Ladies' – Sandy Claireaux

#### Summer 2011 (Division 5, 3-pair)

10 Fixtures – 7 matches won, 3 lost. Should be enough for at least 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the Division and thus promotion to Division 4.

## Results:

1. HOME v. EAST BERGHOLT 2	9 <sup>th</sup> May	8-1
2. HOME v. WOODBRIDGE 3	23 <sup>rd</sup> May	8-1
3. AWAY v. WOODBRIDGE 3	1 <sup>st</sup> June	7-2
4. AWAY v. DAVID LLOYD 2	6 <sup>th</sup> June	2-7
5. AWAY v. EAST BERGHOLT 2	15 <sup>th</sup> June	1-6 (rain stopped play)
6. HOME v. IPSWICH 3	20 <sup>th</sup> June	5-4
7. HOME v. BRAMFORD	6 <sup>th</sup> July	6-3
8. AWAY v. BRAMFORD	11 <sup>th</sup> July	5-4
9. HOME v. DAVID LLOYD 2	18 <sup>th</sup> July	6-3
10. AWAY v. IPSWICH 3	21 <sup>ST</sup> July	3-6

## Comments on Summer League:

We had a good summer season, winning 7 of our 10 matches, including several close ones. Our perennial struggle to find a full team made the difference between winning and losing the division. We had to win our final match of the season against Ipswich to stand a chance of depriving them of first place. They had been beaten only once during the season – by us! We couldn't field a full team that day, so they won.

Good result for the season, let us pray!

## Winter 2011/12 (Division 6, 1-pair)

8 of 10 fixtures played at the time of writing, with 6 wins and 19 points (sets) out of a possible 24, averaging 2.375 of 3 points per match.

## Results:

1. HOME v. DAVID LLOYD 3	29 <sup>th</sup> October	3-0
2. AWAY v. STOWMARKET 8	5 <sup>th</sup> November	3-0
3. HOME v. ST. JOHN'S	5 <sup>th</sup> November	1-2
4. AWAY v. CREEKERS	3 <sup>rd</sup> December	2-1
5. HOME v. STOWMARKET 8	10 <sup>th</sup> December	3-0
6. AWAY v. ST. JOHN'S	14 <sup>th</sup> January '12	3-0
7. AWAY v. DAVID LLOYD 3	21 <sup>st</sup> January	3-0
8. HOME v. WOODBRIDGE	28 <sup>th</sup> January	1-2
9. HOME v. CREEKERS	18 <sup>th</sup> February	
10. AWAY v. WOODBRIDGE	4 <sup>th</sup> March	

## Comments on Winter League:

We have had a good winter season so far, with 6 wins – 5 at 3-0. One match lost was avenged in the return match, with a winning aggregate score. The other remains to be settled! We stand a good chance of winning the Division, depending on our final 2 matches.

A mild winter has resulted in few cancellations due to weather, although opponent postponements have prolonged our season until the first half of March.

Only 4 ladies have had the chance to play in this single-pair winter division. We should consider entering a second pair next season.

## Outlook for 2012-13

The Ladies team has benefited from the addition of Linda Dhondy who joined the club in the latter part of the summer season, making a winning contribution to the Winter League results. We need more good players if we are to perform well in higher divisions.

## Mixed – Debra Young

The mixed team also had a successful summer season and moved up to division 4. Similarly, a very successful floodlit season, winning 5 from 5 matches with 3 remaining. Debra thanked all members of the team who played so well throughout the season and provided the food.

### **7 Election of Officers:**

The President, Peter Richards, took the Chair and asked whether there were any nominations for the post of Chairman? Debra Young proposed Geoff Scott, this was seconded by Liz Allen and there being no other nominations, was unanimously accepted by the floor. Sarah Hawker advised that she would stand down as a committee member this time and make way for “fresh blood”. The committee thanked Sarah for her work on the committee over the last few years.

The nominations for the remaining officers were as follows:

Treasurer:	Brian Dicks	Committee Nomination
Secretary:	Paul Knowles	Committee Nomination
	Trevor Rowland	Committee Nomination
	Liz Allan	Committee Nomination
	Debra Young	Committee Nomination

The above were proposed by Jan Richards and seconded by Sarah Hawker and accepted in a block vote by the members.

(At the moment there is no volunteer for the position of Vice Chairman whose role will be covered by other committee members as and when required.)

In addition, two new members were proposed: Bill Bailey and Angela Forrest. Both were accepted and voted onto the Committee by unanimous vote.

A further 3 members declared themselves willing to make up a “Sub Committee” and take on the task of organising social events for members during the year, these were: Sarah Hawker, G. Wilson and Jo Newman. Debra proposed and Liz seconded their appointment and the members unanimously voted all three candidates in.

### **Election of Team Captains:**

As two of the existing captains declared themselves willing to continue in their roles, it was proposed that they should continue. There being no other nominations, the following people took on the captain's roles:

Ladies Captain:	Sandy Claireaux	Committee Nomination
Mixed Captain:	Debra Young	Committee Nomination

With Jonathon resigning, the members were asked whether anyone was willing to take on the role of men's team captain. Unfortunately there were no volunteers so the chairman and committee will have to try to find a replacement from the membership.

Men's Captain: Vacant position

### **8 Playing Arrangements:**

With the exception of Saturday afternoon, which is no longer a fixed booking, (it was generally only used for matches in the winter. In future, the team captain will notify the town council of the court's use and the council will then invoice the club separately for this), playing times were proposed to be the same as last year:

Summer season:	Sunday mornings	9.30 – 12.00
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	Tuesday evenings	6.30 – 9.00
	Thursday evenings	6.30 – 9.00
Winter season:	Sunday mornings	9.30 – 12.00
	Tuesday evenings	6.30 – 8.30
	Thursday evenings	6.30 – 8.30 (Oct/Nov/Mar only)

Ad-hoc play has been agreed with the Town Council but conditions apply.

However, Geoff suggested that the club might need to review this situation during the year if membership continues to fall, as we may not be able to finance the use of all of the courts. However, this action would only be taken if the situation deteriorated dramatically, as we would not want to jeopardise the current payment arrangements, which are very beneficial to the club, as highlighted by Brian and Peter.

## **9 Country Membership:**

Paul advised that the club was considering introducing a new category of membership, which would allow long-term visitors to the area to join for a reduced fee as a “Country Member”. This form of membership is present in the LTA’s constitution and as we are aligning our club with this, (see next point), it was seen as a good opportunity to give us the ability to accept members who may not be willing to pay a full year’s subscription, but from whom we could get some fees and their talents for team play etc.

The country members would have to have a home address that was at least 50 miles away to qualify for this class of membership and not be permanently resident within that distance. Brian proposed that the committee consider the details of this scheme and implement it, Debra seconded that motion. The suggestion was unanimously voted in.

## **10 Revised Club Constitution:**

Paul advised that the club had needed to update its own constitution in order to align itself with the LTA’s. Details of the new constitution had been circulated to the members prior to the meeting for their perusal. Paul explained that these changes are beneficial to the club, in that they clarify existing rules and add in areas that were not previously covered, but may be useful in the future and recommended acceptance. Geoff confirmed that he had also been through the new constitution and had helped to clarify the new one and was happy for the club to adopt it. Brian proposed that the new constitution be accepted and Debra seconded the motion. The proposal was passed unanimously.

## **11 Subscriptions:**

At this point, Peter Richards suggested that we discuss point 12 on the agenda first, as this might have a bearing on subscription fees. Following this discussion, and the subsequent proposal’s rejection, (see below), the committee proposed that membership fees remain the same as last year, i.e. an annual membership of £100 for a Senior and £60 for a Student, (with a £10 discount for both categories if payment is received before the end of April). No other discounts apply. The proposal was unanimously carried by the members.

The social membership fee will remain at £5.

Linda suggested that the Visitor fee be increased, as this was very low. After some discussion it was agreed and Peter suggested that it be raised from £2 to £4, which Debra seconded. The members carried the motion unanimously.

## **12 Items Raised by Members:**

### **1. Winter Summer Membership:**

There was a request from some members to consider re-introducing the above category of membership. A lengthy discussion ensued, which included the following:

- It would add to administration.
- It might encourage more people to play if they only have to pay for the summer, when they want to play.
- It might encourage a number of members to only play in the summer, which would lead to further reduced income and fewer players available for match play.
- The summer membership would have to be higher pro rata as it provides the best tennis conditions and access to tournaments etc., so it could not be half of the annual fee, (in the past it was around £70 but this would have to be reviewed).
- The actual saving to summer only members is very small, but would keep them from using the months of March and October, (which are technically winter months, but often have very good weather!).
- When we surveyed members before the change two years ago, we found that the vast majority played all year round.
- Our fees are already very modest at less than £2 per week.

Following this discussion, Sandy proposed that there be a change back to Summer/Winter membership, but there was no second so the motion was abandoned.

## **2. Short Sets at Busy Times**

Gill Wilson suggested that when it is very busy, then the club might implement short sets to speed up the turnaround of players. Peter reminded us that we do have the facility to switch to 7 game sets and have used it in the past, particularly in cold weather, (before we had a clubhouse). Sarah also remembered having used this system in the summer when there were a lot of players.

Geoff advised that it is down to a committee member to decide if there is a need, but one has to remember that it will be difficult to please all of the players all of the time, so it needs to be seriously considered before implementation.

## **3. Committee email & Phone Numbers**

Gill also asked if members could have access to member email addresses and phone numbers. Paul advised that the email addresses are already available via emails sent out by the secretary as all are copied in. It was agreed that Committee phone numbers be added to the "Club Opening Rota" posted in the clubhouse, for members to use if required.

## **4. Encouraging New Members, (especially younger players)**

At various point during the meeting, the need for new members was raised, e.g. during Captain's reports; membership fees, playing times etc. I have grouped these all together for simplicity:

There was a suggestion from Gill Wilson that we should encourage youngsters down to play tennis and use the courts, at a reduced fee, especially around the time Wimbledon takes place. There was also the suggestion from Peter Richards that we contact the High school and look to encourage players from there to use the tennis club courts, as in the past this has been beneficial to the club. Linda suggested that we might be able to attract some players from the swimming club and volunteered to ask around.

Peter also suggested that the club's Hadleigh newsletter articles be more regular, no matter what was written, we just needed to keep ourselves in the open. Making use of other tennis articles could help to fill out in week months where there was not much Hadleigh news.

It was also suggested that the "Country" membership should be touted as this might encourage visitors to the club, a mention in the Hadleigh newsletter might help here too?

Geoff advised that of course the committee will be looking at ways to increase the membership and any suggestions would be appreciated. In the past the club had benefitted from a good feed through from the junior coach, however at the moment this did not appear to be happening.

### **13 AOB**

Linda Dhondy asked whether anything could be done by the committee with regard to the condition, (and smell), in the ladies' toilets, which was really bad during a recent match. Geoff advised that this subject was a continual topic at the Layham Road meetings, but that so far the town council had not been able to take action.

However, Geoff advised that the Rugby club, (who also expressed the same concerns), are trying to get the council to allow them to upgrade the toilets and changing rooms and have asked for the tennis club's support in bringing this proposal through. So hopefully there will be a resolution to the problem soon.

Paul asked all present to make sure that their British Tennis membership was up to date and that they were linked to the Hadleigh club as this has an impact on our Wimbledon ticket allocation.

Geoff advised that it was planned to hold the next committee meeting at the earliest opportunity.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.15pm