



AGM

24th NOVEMBER 2021

1. MEMBERS PRESENT –

Elaine Loh
Miriam Catlow
Martin Seagail
Dan Tarak
Chris Van Dyk
Kate Butler
Vartan Melkonian
Jonathan Stamp

Tom Loh
Sue Maxwell
Judy Young
Lynda Herity
Dave Rapp
David Papanelopoulos
Mohamed Latif
Roy Richardson

David Meeks
Chrissie Van Dyk
Sue Blythe
Adrian Thompson
Bob Arthy
Jeremy Gilbey
Claire Gregerson
Ken Waller

APOLOGIES –

Andy Causton
Johny Conway
Deborah Blackmore
Frances Arthy
Stuart Young

Pam Peel
Cheryl Marshall
Brigid Rogers
Alison Campbell
Amanda Benetis

Steve Shea
Stuart Messer
Andy Rogers
Diane Harrison

2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM AGM 2020

Chris VanDyk asked if there were any comments or questions from the last minutes. None were raised. The minutes were therefore adopted.



3. CHAIRMANS REPORT – Chris Van Dyk

A warm welcome and thanks to everyone for giving up your valuable time to attend the AGM.

As many of you will be aware Stuart Young had a heart attack yesterday on court which was concerning to put it mildly; Chris asked Judy to give an update. Judy told all present that Stuart was in capable hands in Harefield hospital and has had a stent inserted. Judy expressed her thanks to members who were there. Dave Rapp and Cherry Marshall, both medically trained were on hand and helped take care of him whilst others called an ambulance and Tom went to open the padlocked height barrier at the entrance so the ambulance could gain entry to Lady Ela Drive.

Moving on -

After the traumas of 2020 leading up to last year's AGM, I imagine we all hoped that Covid may finally be coming under some sort of control and would be behind us. Unfortunately, the anticipated spike did indeed appear towards the end of 2020 and the Club was closed from 5th November, hence last years' AGM was held over Zoom. We re-opened on 2nd December but our optimism was short lived, with all tennis clubs closed again for January, February & March.

As last year, the Committee continued to support my view that we should make a financial gesture to each of the coaches during the closures when they were unable to work, something our regional LTA rep. confirmed very few tennis clubs did. It was also a justifiable way of spending some of the government & sports council grants we received.

Unfortunately, that three-month closure also meant that the full league season for men's, ladies & mixed doubles was not organised in time. However the League were persuaded to let clubs organise 'half seasons' with just a home or away (not both) friendly match against teams in what would have been the proposed 2021 league structure.

Those friendly matches, if there is such a thing, were thoroughly enjoyed by all who took part and it bodes well for the coming season, assuming that does indeed go ahead. Our thanks to Miriam & Jonathan and their various captains for making this happen.



The lack of league matches did, however, bring back into focus just how important social tennis is to any club and ours is no exception. It was recognised last year that it's the lifeblood of tennis clubs and we built on that expansion and grew it again this year with increased attendance at social tennis events.

The men in particular enjoyed several 'hot dog' evenings, of tennis, a beer and unsurprisingly, a hot dog. The plan for next year is to carefully migrate this successful format to mixed doubles evenings. However, it's acknowledged that these culinary delights may have to gain a little in sophistication.

Once again I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those running the various WhatsApp groups that have kept the social tennis side going so positively and effectively this year.

Despite the increase in social tennis and associated events, caution remains the watchword as the Covid numbers are high in our area and you will all have seen the reminder sent out recently by Judy & Lynda; we are obviously nowhere near out of the woods yet with this virus.

As mentioned last year, one of my previous disappointments was our online presence. However, Chris Coughlan and his team at Re-View facilitated a great deal of online content on the website, social media & email, so communication was excellent during the various closures.

Clearly the social side once again took quite a hit, however I'm sure we all enjoyed Dave Rapp's various quizzes during the closures. What I now don't know about Naval battles of the 17th century isn't worth knowing; thank you so much Dave for keeping us educated.

So, please ensure you are booked onto Dave's 'EASY PEASY' quiz this Saturday; he has faithfully promised that everyone will be able to answer at least 7 questions correctly. It's not entirely clear whether that is 7 questions per round or 7 in total

Despite implementing a debit/credit card reader to take payments, its usage hasn't really kicked in. We still run an 'honesty' bar with members noting what drinks they've had and Martin regularly chases members to clear their bar tab. I hope to see more use of this next year to ease the burden on Martin.

After an absence in 2020 due to the pandemic, we were able to run a Summer Tournament again and many congratulations to the winners: Jaina in the ladies' singles, Thomas in the men's singles, Alpa & Jaina in the ladies' doubles, Andy Coles & Jonathan in the men's doubles, and Kathryn & Geoff in the mixed doubles.



Similarly in the Plate competition, Alpa in the ladies' singles, David Hall in the men's singles, Sue & Alex in the ladies' doubles, Charles & Simon in the men's doubles and Lisa & Will in the mixed doubles.

In September we ran the first of what we hope will be many more Fun Days with families taking part in a variety of tennis-based games. The day seemed to work well, so we'll learn from that and run more, maybe using more courts to run games in parallel so we can get even more families involved on the day.

As mentioned last year, our stated aim was to replace the current halogen floodlights with LED floodlights. With lockdown and limited access to both our club and other clubs for reference visits, progress was limited

However this summer, we revisited this important project with renewed vigour and clubs who had installed LED floodlights as per our preferred supplier quotation, were visited. You were informed by email however I am delighted to confirm that an order was placed and we have a scheduled install date for courts 4, 5 & 6 for w/c 20th December. A few weeks ago this was in some jeopardy, however it now seems it may even be installed the week before.

All tennis clubs have an on-going task of recruitment. In keeping our membership fee increase to a minimum, the numbers of members must continue to grow to help finance various CapEx projects such as the floodlights already mentioned and clearly we will also need to upgrade the floodlights on courts 1, 2 & 3, and in due course we will need to resurface the courts. Membership continues to grow steadily with total numbers now approaching 280 and the summary is that the Club is currently in a healthy financial position.

However, we mustn't be complacent as the new floodlights on courts 4, 5 & 6 will put a £26k dent in reserves and obviously the sinking fund for upgrading the floodlights on courts 1, 2 & 3 plus the renewing of court surfaces, must be replenished.

Membership fee income is up around 9%, despite giving discounts to many members in lieu of the forced closures during the year. The largest growth is in the Minis section which has more than doubled in the past year to well over 60. This prompted us to rethink the Junior Secretary role and re-create the separate Mini Secretary role and we are delighted that Kate Butler is revved up and raring to go. Dan will look after the Juniors and Kate the Minis and I know they will work tirelessly to continue that exceptional growth.

Watch this space for some exciting news regarding new initiatives for our younger members very soon!



I would like to say a huge thank you to all the committee who have worked tirelessly in trying to make the experience at our tennis club, both a safe and enjoyable one, in what has been another challenging year. I will always regard the safety of our members of paramount importance and it remains the guiding principle throughout.

Regrettably, two of those committee stalwarts over recent years have decided it's time to pass the baton on to someone new. Firstly, the incredible Stuart Young has been looking after our grounds and clubhouse for many years and has done a fantastic job with solutions that have saved the club a fortune in maintenance and repairs. My thanks go to Stuart for all that he has done. It is a truly unique knowledge that he passes on to David Papanelopoulos.

Secondly, the wonderful Sue Maxwell is finally handing her member spreadsheets and welcome emails on to someone new.

The only slight issue is that we thought we hadn't found that someone new just yet! But breaking news! Claire has shown great interest in taking on this important role.

Most of you will have been welcomed to the Club by Sue and indeed chased for your membership fee by her. We will all miss her unique way of achieving a perfect balance of welcoming a new member and reminding them of their financial responsibilities. Once again thank you Sue for all that you've done.

I and the whole Committee will miss you and your contributions enormously but look forward to continuing to see you both, on court and at the bar, for many years to come. As an incentive we would be delighted if you will both accept an honorary membership for the coming membership year, as a huge thank you from us all.

Unfortunately, I can't say that it has been an absolute pleasure to undertake the role of Chairman this year as we have had further significant interruptions in another challenging year. However, like all of us, I am hoping for a more 'normal' 2022.

Having played at many tennis clubs all around Herts, in my opinion our little tennis Club remains one of the best if not the best. Only this Monday, I hosted the chap who re-laid courts 1, 2 & 3 six years ago, as he was here to repair the baseline on court 3. As we walked out together, he stopped, looked around, and said "I love this place, The Walled Garden really is a lovely place".

So many visitors make a comment like that or something similar. Let's never take it for granted as we enjoy being the temporary custodians of a truly special place.

And let's really make it fly next year!

Stay safe everyone and thank you.



4. TREASURERS REPORT –

The accounts were sent out prior to the meeting to all club members via the link on our website.

Adrian gave an overview to the figures.

Membership fees are up on last year as a result of all the efforts by not only Sue Maxwell but all who helped encourage family, friends and acquaintances to join up. The success of our club is that it is more than just somewhere to play tennis unlike major venues where members just play and go home with no social responsibility.

We ended up with a surplus very close to the one recorded last year as a result of various grants. This will be utilised for the LED floodlights project.

The water board have not sent a bill for two years now, which has not been accounted for. However it is not a significant amount.

The running costs for the LED floodlights will reduce our running costs. The deal we have secured is a ten-year guarantee so there will be no charge for replacement bulbs plus the hire of a platform which is the greater percentage of the cost in replacing the bulbs. The lights are longer lasting and give a better light on the courts with no spread into the surrounding houses.

A question was asked after Adrian had finished whether he was more optimistic now than at the start of the year. Most clubs have recorded an increase in membership. This is due to an increased interest in outdoor activity since the start of Covid.

The audited accounts were handed to Lynda for forwarding to Companies House with grateful thanks to Mike Blackmore for his audit.

5. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Chris Van Dyk read out the list of officers for election.

The addition of Mini Secretary was approved. All nominations were approved and will shortly be published both on the website and posted in the clubhouse

The role of Secretary is still vacant with no nominations received. Chris asked if anyone present was interested in taking on the role. No one came forward. Duties include registration with Companies House, the taking of minutes at Committee meetings and the AGM. Both these duties have been undertaken by the Administrator. There is some legal responsibility. Ean in the past mainly used to advise on a legal basis and to check the Rules for viability. A major amount of work on the overhaul of the Rules was done in the last 18 months including having a zoom AGM last year.



The other vacancy is for the Membership Secretary which as stated previously, Claire Gregerson is seriously considering.

Bob Arthy stated that he was willing to continue in his non-Committee role as Community Secretary.

A question was raised as to whether the club had an appointed first aider. Judy, Welfare Officer responded that she had spent her entire career in the NHS and was a qualified first aider. Roy Richardson added that all the coaches are also trained in First Aid.

6. RULES

There are 2 further rule changes in addition to those approved nominally at the 2020 Zoom AGM meeting

Mini - A child aged 10 years or under on 1st April entitled to use the courts at any time, subject to availability, under the supervision of an adult, and to exclusive use with the Juniors at such time as the Management Committee shall stipulate. **From 1.4.2022 Mini members will not be charged a subscription until they reach 6 years of age.**

9.1 The Club shall be managed by a Management Committee consisting of:

- a) Chairman
- b) Secretary
- c) Treasurer
- d) Men's Club Captain
- e) Ladies Club Captain
- f) Membership Secretary
- g) Junior Secretary
- h) Mini Secretary**
- i) Ground Secretary
- j) Social Secretary
- k) Bar Secretary
- l) Welfare Officer
- m) Marketing Secretary
- n) Director of Tennis (appointed)
- o) The Administrator (appointed)

There were no objections or questions so the Rule changes were duly approved by all.



7. ADOPTION OF SUBSCRIPTION fees for 2021/23

On request Chris VanDyk read out the proposed subscription fees and the % variance compared to last year. Chris stated that all proposed subscriptions were approved by at the last Committee meeting on November 27th. The increases are all minimal and are well within the current CPI of 4.2%

One question was raised – is there a discount for the over 80's?

Answer was there is no provision at the moment for a discount for the over 80's.

All the new subscriptions were adopted by all.

8. AOB

Bob Arthy as Community Secretary said he was planning to reintroduce the Invincibles Fun Sunday Tournaments which he used to organise on Sunday afternoons and Bank Holidays starting at 1.30pm on a date to be announced in the New Year.

Chris told the meeting that he was keen for the club to be as environmentally friendly and as green as possible and to that end intended to set up a sub-committee headed up by Charles Perry who attended the recent C.O.P conference in Glasgow. Charles will be recruiting members to be on the sub-committee. Not necessarily Club Committee Members.

Someone commented that one of the showers in the men's changing room was not working. A job for the new Ground Secretary David Papanelopoulos.

An announcement was made to remind members that the Christmas Singalong would be held in the clubhouse on December 17th. There will be a party with singing of Carols and popular songs accompanied by ukuleles, guitars and drums.

As there were no further comments, Chris thanked everyone present for attending and declared the meeting closed at 8.50pm.

The minutes will be displayed in due course on the Committee Notice board together with a copy of the audited accounts and the new Committee Officers for 2021/22.