

## CROSS IN HAND LAWN TENNIS CLUB – ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES – OCTOBER 2016

Held on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2016 at 2000hrs, the Chairman called the meeting to order at 20:06hrs.

**1. Present (Committee and Voting Members):** Chris Groom - Chairman (CG), Rob French – Acting Secretary for the AGM/Joint Membership Secretary (RF), Helen French – Joint Membership Secretary (HF), Paul Dent (PD) of South Coast Tennis (SCT), Martin Stringell - (MS), John Tetzlaff - Treasurer (JT).

David Aldrich, Angela Coram, Ian Cruikshank, Andrew Deadman, Joyce Eldridge, Michael Eldridge, David Eyres, Helen Garvey, Roger Gilham, Amanda Gillet, Stephen Godfrey, Mike Hammerton, Janie Huggins, Andrea Law, June Peck, Betty Ricketts, David Ricketts, John Robinson, James Smith, Joanne Smith, Caroline Tetzlaff, John Trepass, Wendy Trepass, Peter Turnbull, Claire Turrell.

Present (non-voting members): Dorothy Russell.

2. Apologies for Absence: Massimo Brooks, Corrie Huntley, Bryan Hamblin, Tracey Boorman, Kirsty Chambers, Linda McNamee,

**Agenda and Proposals:** The following had been posted on the club noticeboard in advance in accordance with the club constitution and also e-mailed to members -

1. Register of attendees
2. Apologies for absence
3. Chairman's Report, including Hon. Secretary's Report, Tennis Manager's Report & Maintenance Report
4. Honorary Treasurer's Report
5. Membership Secretary's Report
6. South Coast Tennis Report
7. Proposals and Resolutions
8. Election of Committee/Auditor
9. Any Other Business

### 3. Chairman's Report, including Hon. Secretary's Report, Tennis Manager's Report & Maintenance Report - CG

CG opened the meeting, thanking those members that were in attendance for their ongoing support and proposing a vote of thanks to the current committee including South Coast Tennis for their hard work in the preceding year, which resulted in a round of applause from the members.

CG congratulated all the teams, where there have been some notable league successes, and all those who have either run or participated in club tournaments. Ladies Day for instance resulted in substantial income for the club, which contrasts with the general situation of declining interest in social activities and therefore also bar income. There is currently no Social Secretary and CG welcomed all suggestions from members.

CG then reported on club maintenance, noting the improvements in tiling and decoration in the changing rooms and the addition of picnic tables to provide additional seating and an outside seating area. Further improvements are planned for the coming financial year, depending on available funds, particularly focused on ensuring that the courts continue to be of a high standard. The clay courts have had additional material added in recent months, and CG reminded everyone that this is expensive and we can all help with the right sweeping and ensuring our shoes do not carry material off the court. As no one has volunteered to fill the Maintenance Manager position at present, all maintenance jobs in the last year have been organised by the committee. The workload should not be onerous if more people contribute their time, and this will save the club spending on expensive contracted services and hopefully ensure for example that the astro surface stays in good condition until replacement can be afforded by the club. MB will therefore publish a rota and ask for volunteers for ongoing tasks such as court sweeping, and CG asked as many people as possible to contribute.

CG closed his report by reminding everyone to opt in to the LTA Wimbledon ballot and thereby ensure the club receives the maximum ticket allocation, and to continue to give the committee feedback so that they can best represent the wishes of all members.

4. Honorary Treasurer's Report - JT

JT comprehensively covered the club's finances, including receipts and payments, the balance sheet and cashflows (5 years prior, 5 year projection from this October and also from the 2015 AGM for comparison) and the accounts were provided for all the members present at the meeting to refer to. Normalised receipts for the year were £27,161 vs £31,565 for previous year, down by £4,404 (14%). Normalised payments for the year were £13,533 compared to £13,719 marginally down by £186 (1%). The surplus for the year was therefore £13,628, down by £4,218 (24%) but of course still a healthy surplus. The majority of the reduction relates to membership number reductions, as well as bar income and other social and fundraising activities. The excellent ladies' day was an exception to the rule and generated £500. The outstanding loan amount was queried by a member, and it was clarified that only £2500 remained to be paid. Steve Godfrey mentioned that he had been told a further loan of £10,000 could be available as we were paying off the clay court loan in 4 years rather than the maximum of 10.

With the 5 year projection having necessitated the movement of the astro court refurbishment back one year to 2020, a lot of the discussion with the members then focused on how long the astro courts would last and what would be found in terms of drainage and other issues which would require once-off expenditure when the carpets were removed. There were also questions on more general matters including the phasing of costs across years (actual vs. normalised expenditure) and the performing rights licenses, plus the likely cost increase of subscriptions. Although it is too early to be definitive, CG confirmed that there would be a modest increase in the main categories in the region of 3.5% or £5 on an adult membership.

JT closed by saying that it was clear that, based on the new and more realistic, conservative projections, the funding situation was tight and the key to avoiding an untenable situation of a lack of funds and an immediate need to refurbish the astro courts was increased membership, and careful annual cost management including self-help in terms of maintaining the court surfaces. Expenditure being covered, all additional members are adding full value of their subscriptions. Lost members through natural churn had to be at least replaced. The members clearly appreciated the clarity and detail of JT's report and gave him a round of applause.

5. Membership Secretary's Report - HF

HF clarified that the report related to the membership year (April to March) and was therefore not directly reconcilable to the Club financial year. There has been a slight fall in membership numbers, mainly driven by age/injury and moving rather dissatisfaction with the club. However the related income is down by approximately £1.2k over a subscription income of approximately £23k so this needs to be reversed. A number of new members have joined the club, encouraged by personal contact, along with a new welcome pack and membership noticeboard in the clubhouse. The focus is on working closely with South Coast Tennis who continue to be a valuable source of potential new members, especially juniors. Making it more attractive for those receiving just coaching to join the club needs to be a focus for all members. HF confirmed that the membership form continues to serve a purpose in terms of the members giving their commitment to current terms and conditions, but that we will continue to look to simplify both the administration and payment options, for example a coaching-only surcharge via South Coast Tennis. There were questions from the members related to standing orders, which we might potentially explore although not monthly payment which vastly increases admin, and whether visitors were still required to pay and how much. There was surprise expressed that the £5 charge was not well known and that little income accrued from what is an honesty policy for members. Ian Cruikshank also suggested that an advertising budget was needed and others concurred, especially with Heathfield set for further housing expansion. The members present applauded HF at the end of her report.

6. South Coast Tennis Report - PD

PD ran through the current coaching programmes, what had been successful and what less successful. One area of particular pride is the new junior academy which creates a tier of the best juniors, who then support each other's development. SCT are looking to bring in a competition manager to help organise participation in all the available external events. PD emphasised that the LTA programmes are complex and ever changing and the club also needed to be engaged and involved to take advantage of the incentives (advertising, free equipment). One area of real concern is the transfer of juniors and their parents into club membership. PD said that SCT is working very well with the membership secretaries now, but continued flexibility was the key. Other clubs are poaching and offering free membership periods and parents and their children simply move to

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where the best offer is coming from. A couple of members concurred and cited examples of poaching. PD mentioned that the club did not advertise unlike many others and again a member agreed and said it was a surprise that there was no budget set aside for this. The continued expansion of Heathfield could be an opportunity to increase the membership base. PD concluded by reminding everyone that the club had a great product, but it needs to be sold to prospective members.

### 7. Proposal and Resolutions – CG/RF

The following Proposals had been sponsored by the Committee (C):

Proposal C1 - The committee proposes to amend the classes of members as follows:

- to remove Adult Under 25 membership
- to remove the Adult Coaching membership (all non-member surcharges will be handled by SCT)
- to replace Social Membership with inclusion in the “100 Club”
- to align junior categories to those in use by the LTA e.g. mini reds, etc. and therefore also by SCT, including a new 8 and under category.

This means that the proposed membership categories will be as follows:

- Adult
- Student (under 25 in full time education)
- Family (includes all children under the age of 18)
- 18 and under
- 12 and under
- 8 and under
- 5 and under
- Parent Hitter
- Trial (limited to one month)

Proposal C2 - The committee proposes to introduce two levels of subscription per category for the 2017/18 membership year to promote prompt payment. This will reduce administrative workload and is consistent with the current constitution which allows for an entrance fee to be charged and any member who has not paid by 30th April to be deemed to have resigned and have to re-pay the entrance fee.

Proposal C3 - The committee proposes to delete 18.7 (members to provide balls and floodlights) and amend 18.3/4 (club sessions, for which balls and floodlights are provided) of the constitution, thereby making floodlights and balls available at all times as part of an inclusive membership package.

Proposal C4 - The committee proposes to make general updates to the constitution to promote clarity, consistency and simplicity, plus the flexibility to deal with changing circumstances and allow the management of the club by the management committee as described by Section 3 (j) and 9.1. One example is that the committee may not be full or stable from one AGM to the next, and the changes proposed will provide for this eventuality. Material decisions will still rest with the members at AGM/EGM. The last update to the constitution was in 2013.

[A full list of the proposed changes is attached to this note for those that wish to review them.]

Proposal C5 - The committee proposes to specifically provide for appropriate non-tennis use of the courts, with the caveat that any such uses are approved by the committee at a formal meeting and therefore considered against insurances and to ensure no damage to the facilities or disruption to the tennis activities, which these activities would rate below in priority as referenced in section 18.8 of the constitution. Examples could be to allow members at their request to play 5-a-side football on the astro courts as a warm down activity after match practice, netball or activities related to club open days for existing or prospective members. It is not proposed that scheduled matches or practice for matches for other non-tennis sports be allowed, and no change of use in terms the courts or the club would therefore be required.

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The following Proposals had been received from Members (M):

Proposal M1 - This proposal has been made by Steve Godfrey and seconded by Michael Eldridge. The constitution should be amended to reflect that the courts may only be used for the purpose of playing tennis or coaching tennis unless previous agreement has been obtained from more than 50% of the adult membership present at an Annual General Meeting or a specially convened Extraordinary General Meeting.

At the meeting, the following discussions and votes took place:

C1 – Steve Godfrey noted that the club should continue to make it as easy as possible for parents to pay the correct amount, whatever the age of their children. Proposed by CG, seconded by MS and unanimously carried by the voting members present. Note that the club constitution will be updated accordingly.

C2 – John Trepas expressed his view that, the proposal being consistent with the existing provisions in the constitution, there was no need to hold a vote. The voting members present were in agreement. Note that the club constitution will be updated accordingly.

C3 – This proposal was the subject of much debate, with differing views as to whether a simple all-inclusive membership fee would positively influence the need to reverse the declining membership base. The committee was supported in its views by some members that the floodlight income was very low and that there were few times that balls and floodlights were not actually already available to all members, and that this would be a great benefit to those that booked courts outside club, coaching and match times. Others expressed surprise that that an honesty-based system was not effective, that this proposal might dilute the attendance at club sessions or that it might lead to the lights being left on when no play was occurring, although the presence of the coaches on most days and the overnight timer would mitigate this risk. Proposed by CG and seconded by MS, this proposal was not supported by the majority of voting members present.

C4 – Whilst there was general support from the members for keeping the constitution up to date, simplifying and clarifying where it would prove beneficial, it was felt that there was insufficient knowledge of the changes proposed to take this to a vote at the AGM. Steve Godfrey pointed out that the constitution needs to continue to be recognised in certain ways which support the status of the club e.g. CASC, and John Trepas added the LTA. Steve Godfrey did note that there had been flexibility to personalise the CASC template. These points will be taken into account for the constitution updates that result from the endorsement of other proposals at the AGM.

C5 – A number of points were clarified including that this proposal would be for members only and that football would be played with a softball. Proposed by CG, seconded by MS and carried by the voting members present by 18 to 8. Note that the club constitution will be updated accordingly.

M1 – CG noted that this proposal was now rendered obsolete by carrying C5. The members present agreed and this proposal was not taken to a vote.

### 8. Election of Committee/Auditor – CG

CG informed the meeting that the current committee had all volunteered to continue and that no alternative nominations had been received. Andrea Law also agreed to continue as the club Auditor. The voting members present at the meeting unanimously endorsed the proposals and there was a round of applause for the committee.

### 9. Any Other Business

The club will hold its annual Christmas social evening after club night on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2016.

The committee wishes to add its thanks to all those members who contribute to the club without necessarily receiving any formal acknowledgement, such as Jane Huggins and Linda Pugsley (maintenance of the pots/planters) and Dot Russell (100 Club draw). It is thanks to all their efforts that Cross in Hand Lawn Tennis Club can continue to offer an attractive and friendly place to play tennis.

**The Meeting closed at 22:00hrs.**